Ori-Oke Spirituality and Social Change in Africa

Contemporary Perspectives

Edited by
Soede Nathanael Yaovi, Patrick U. Nwosu, Akiti G. Alamu, Lemuel E. Odeh and A. Y. Mohammed

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Langaa Research & Publishing CIG
Mankon, Bamenda

Publisher:
Langaa RPCIG
Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group
P.O. Box 902 Mankon
Bamenda
North West Region
Cameroon
Langaagrp@gmail.com
www.langaa-rpcig.net

Distributed in and outside N. America by African Books Collective
orders@africanbookscollective.com
www.africanbookcollective.com

ISBN-10: 9956-550-03-5

ISBN-13: 978-9956-550-03-6

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Dedication

This book project is dedicated to the John Templeton Foundation, USA, for its continuous support for research and development of humanity. Also, Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity, is acknowledged for its generous grant award towards the success of this project.

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Foreword

The dynamic nature of Christianity has necessitated its movement from the cathedral to mountain top. Thus, Prayer Mountain is simply referred to as *Ori- Oke* among South Western part of Nigeria. *Ori Oke,* within the praxis of Nigerian Christian lexicon is synonymous with the enactment of a sacred space on a mountain top characterized by various prayer regimes, rituals, exorcism and religious practices, aimed at eliciting the help of the divine to alleviate the existential challenges of a devotee. It is of interest to note that *Ori-Oke* has been inviting to those with problems as a haven from the billows of life.

The proliferation of these sacred mountains started with the emergence of the African Indigenous Churches as far back as the 1930s. Today, *Ori-Oke* have become centres of pilgrimage as a result of the lived experiences of devotees, creating unique religious value quite distinct from the aesthetic value of these mountain tops. The spirituality of *Ori-Oke* is anchored on the absolute belief in God and the infusion of traditional African worldview sensibilities in religious rites and worship. As a matter of fact, *Ori-Oke* spirituality employs resources of Christian tradition, introduced by the formal agents of Christianity, synthesized with traditional culture, to develop a life based on the precepts of the Lord Jesus.

Ori-Oke, within praying churches, is the re-sacralization of space on the mountain top where people seek the supernatural to ameliorate their existential challenges. It is not out of place to note that contextual challenges are being handled by *Ori-Oke,* not without their social construct and unholy attitude in a holy ground. In fact, the study of *Ori-Oke* has various approaches. Its dexterity is multi-disciplinary in outlook; hence, it can be approached theologically, religiously, philosophically, psychologically, sociologically, historically, geographically, musicologically, economically, commercially and linguistically, among others. All these prompted this international conference, sponsored by the Nagel Institute, where scholars of international repute from all fields of academic endeavour converged at University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, to bring

out the academic contours of *Ori-Oke* at a glance. The end-product of this intellectual discourse and disquisition has been essayed on the pages of the book.

As a relatively new terrain in academic inquiry, we still require further dialogue and documentation to offset the bills of inadequate exploration. This conference proceeding as well as other initial efforts, has set the ball rolling. This work could not have been possibly written without the help of Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity and the efforts of the contributors. We unreservedly acknowledge, with thanks, the generous support of the John Templeton Foundation, USA.

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Chapter 1

The Historical, Political and Phenomenological Importance of *Ori-Oke* (Hills and Mountains) in South-Western Nigeria

Rotimi Williams Omotoye

Abstract

Ori-Oke is a Yoruba word which is interpreted as mountain or hill in English. It is found in all the nooks and crannies of the geographical zone of South-western Nigeria. Ori-Oke is of great importance to the history, political development, and socio-economic life of the people. Therefore, this paper is an examination of the values of the Ori-Oke phenomenon in human society. The theory adopted in writing this paper is historical and phenomenological. Our findings indicate that Ori-Oke are useful as religious centres, by the adherents of traditional religions, Islam and Christianity. They were used as places of refuge during the Kiriji or Internecine wars in the 19th century in Yorubaland. In the 21st century, some of the Ori-Oke have become tourist attractions and economic ventures for state governments and some religious organizations. The paper concludes that, Ori-Oke are not monopolized by any religion in Yorubaland, because the three recognized religions are making use of mountains and hills to enhance their spiritual rejuvenations.

Introduction

According to Olaniran (2003), a discussion of the environment in regards to the world's socio-economic development, has been a national and global event in recent times. I believe that religion as a phenomenon should not be neglected in these discussions. Peel (1968) opined that religion has played, and is still playing a role in the social change of the human race. The organizers of *Ori-Oke* International Conference at the University of Ilorin, Ilorin in 2017 should be commended, because the issue of mountain prayer and

spirituality has been an issue of current debate and discussion at departmental seminars in many Nigerian Universities. Symposia have been organised and local and international conferences on religions and related disciplines have focused on the importance of *Ori-Oke*.

In 1992, the World Development Report focused on the theme, 'Development and the Environment.' Many issues of concern were considered in the report. In realizing the importance of religion in the environment, the National Association for the Study of Religions and Education (NASRED), in her 12th Annual conference held in 1999 at Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, examined the theme, 'Religion and the Environment.' Some interesting topics considered were on mountains. A book of readings on the conference was published in the year 2000.

The same issue was addressed at a National Conference organized by the National Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), Western Zone in Nigeria. The Association exhibited her concern for the role of religion in environmental development. Adherents of every religion, no matter the level of civilization and enlightenment, are found and located in a particular environment.

Oyewole (2003) defined the concept of environment from different points of view. According to him, a social scientist will define the term 'as the area of land inhabited by a people, including all that the land supports (plants and animal lives, water bodies both running and stagnant, and the atmosphere overcasting that land) constitutes the environment of that people.' However, to a natural scientist, the environment is much more complex, much more inclusive than that. According to Oyewole, the environment is both 'physical and non-physical.' It consist of both the biotic (the life forms: flora, Fauna and microorganisms) and the abiotic which can also be seen as both internal and external. From an ecological perspective, it is all these features together, with the interactions between and among them, which affect the life and behaviour of the inhabitants, not just as individuals, but as a community of individuals. All of the three definitions of the environment are relevant to our understanding of *Ori-Oke*, mountain prayer and spirituality.

The objective and scope of this paper, therefore, is to highlight the importance and values attached to *Ori-Oke* (mountain/hill) amongst other environmental issues as it affects Christianity and Traditional religion of Yoruba people of South-Western Nigeria. The terms, *Ori-Oke,* 'mountain' or 'hill' will be used interchangeably. Fadipe (1970) said 'the country is hilly, being mainly a dissected Northward-rising plain with isolated hills or groups of hills, usually of granite, rising out of the plain to heights varying between 50 and 800 feet.' Our scope of study will be limited to the importance ascribed to hills in Christianity and African traditional religion in Yorubaland.

The concept of mountains is found in both the Old and New Testament of the Holy Scripture. Many important events are recorded and associated with it. Ojebode (2000) emphasized the importance of mountains in the Old and New Testament books. According to him, the Jewish people used to worship Yahweh on the mountain. For example, in Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 12, the two passages emphasize the importance of mountains in the worship of God. Moses, one of the respected leaders and the appointed deliverer of Israel from Egyptian slavery, collected the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. 'Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain' (Exo. 19: 17).

Mountains can also serve as geographical boundaries among states (Joshua 15: 8-11). The power of God is also demonstrated over nature in the scripture. For example, Psalm 97: 5 says, 'The Mountains melt like wax before the Lord, of all the earth.' The Psalmists in Psalm 99: 2 further say, 'That Lord is great in Zion and He is high above all the people.'

In the New Testament, two of the temptations of Jesus Christ took place on the mountain (Matthew 4: 5-10). He also delivered his master-piece sermon on the mountain, popularly known as "sermon on the mount" (Matt 5). It is also important to know that the transfiguration of Jesus Christ took place on a mountain (Matthew 17: 1-3).

The Importance of Mountains in the history of Christianity in Yorubaland.

It is necessary at this juncture to correct some wrongly held notions by some earlier writers that mountain sites are peculiar to African Independent Churches in Yorubaland. For instance, Ayodele (2000) said 'This is common with some African Independent Churches.' It is true that visits to sacred sites like mountains, river banks etc. are a common feature in African Independent Churches. But visits to mountains or even settling on mountain tops are common features among the early missionaries. In this study, we shall emphasize the geographical areas occupied by the Yoruba people. This has been done several times in our earlier works on Christian missionary enterprise in Yorubaland. The description is germane, so as to give a clear demarcation and areas of influence covered by the study.

When the European Christian missionaries came in the second half of the 19th century to Yorubaland, most of them settled on hills. The buildings in which they lived were located far from the converts. According to Oduyoye (1978), missionaries David Hinderer and Anna Hinderer lived at Kudeti in Ibadan. He said further that 'they established the mission house away from the noise of the city at Kudeti, and other missions were later opened at Oke-Ogunpa and *Oke-Aremo* in 1857.' Neill (1981) also writes that the Roman Catholic Church established her station in Ibadan at Oke-Parde, Oke-Ofa, Oke-Ado and Oke-Are. In Epe, the Christian missionaries settled at Oke-Oyinbo, while in Osogbo the early Catholic missionaries stationed themselves on a hill top. The Roman Catholics used to go on annual pilgrimages to Oke Maria in Otan-Ayegbaju, Osun State.

In Ado-Ekiti, the Anglican Missionaries located their station on a mountain top. Oduyoye is of the opinion that they behaved in such a way 'to create a new community.' This preference displayed by the early Christian missionaries was probably spurred by the desire to live in a cool and serene environment, separated from the indigenous people. We believe that it was counterproductive in the propagation of the gospel. They did not realize that in Yorubaland, social life and

interactions in daily relationships were important for winning the hearts of the people, especially for winning converts.

This attitude was contrary to the actions of the Muslim preachers in Yorubaland. The latter lived amongst the aborigines. In fact, it was one of the factors that led to the early spread of Islam in Yorubaland. According to Gbadamosi (1978) 'The Muslims lived more closely than Christianity with the pagans, whom they cleverly sought to convert.'

In other words, the environment is important in mission work. For a missionary work to be highly successful, the missionaries must seriously take into consideration their level of interaction with the converts. They must live where they live and share some common things with them. This is what Idowu (1973) referred to as 'participatory observation.' The idea of living in isolation or segregation was alien to the Yoruba people. According to Fadipe (1970) they were used to *Agbo-ile* system of living. The family solidarity was a common feature in Yorubaland in the past. However, the idea of living on the mountain satisfied the aspirations and yearnings of the white missionaries.

Ori-Oke Experience in the *Aladura* Churches

As earlier mentioned, one of the characteristics of the *Aladura* Churches in Yorubaland is a visit to sacred sites or the location of churches on hills. In our earlier works, Omotoye (2005) said their emphasis on *Ori-Oke* has become a feature of *Aladura* Churches in Yorubaland. In this piece we agree with Oshitelu (2007) that the *Aladura* Churches believe in *Ori-Oke*. He went further to say that, most of the churches of the Christ Apostolic Church have a prefix "*Oke"* before the name of their churches, such as, *Oke Sioni* (Mount Zion) and *Oke –Igbala* (Mount of Salvation). The Church of the Lord (*Aladura*) performs the annual *Ori-Oke* (Mount Taborah) festival.

That almost all the Christ Apostolic Churches in Yorubaland have the prefix *Oke* before the name of the Church, is not surprising, because the place where the 1930 revival of Apostle Ayo Babalola took place, was at Oke-Oye, Ilesa, Osun State. The Christ Apostolic

Church in Erin Ijesa was named Christ Apostolic Church, Oke Isegun. In Ilorin, the first Christ Apostolic Church was also called Oke-Isegun.

According to Omoyajowo (1982), the hill top is regarded as a sacred place in Cherubim and Seraphim. 'To be at a sacred place… means to participate in life eternal; it is the place where an imperishable life force has been available.' The members of the Church are encouraged to go on hill/mountain tops for prayers, because the place is the point of contact with God, or with infinite power; the place itself takes the quality of holiness or sacredness. Omoyajowo said further that 'Mountains themselves are frequently taken to be living place of God. They go out to Hills in Holy weeks and at all Hallows to fast and pray for children.' Some of the important hills in Yorubaland are Oke Olorunkole, Oke Erinmo, Oke Igbala in Ondo, Oke Calvary in Ikare, and Okejigbo Abeokuta. Others are Ori-Oke Taborah in Ilorin and Ori-Oke Ikoyi, in Ikoyi. Others are Ori-Oke Akinkemi (Okesasa), Oke-Aanu, Oke Irapada Oluwa, Oke-Atunyan, all in Ibadan; Ori Oke Pele in Ondo, Ori-Oke Maria, in Ikare and Ori-Oke Abiye in Ede, Osun State.

The Cherubim and Seraphim members go to the mountain in imitation of Jesus Christ, who often prayed on Mount Olivet and was crucified on Mount Calvary. In Ayodele's interview of priests in the *Aladura* Churches, the interviewees responded that mountains are usually located in the outskirts of the town and are visited only on special occasions for special services. The General Overseer of the United Spiritual Gospel Church explained that he usually sets seven days apart every year during which he goes to a particular mountain for serious prayer and study, in order to receive divine guidance for the church in the next year.

Mountain/Hills in African traditional religion

Traditional religion has been defined by Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) as the indigenous religion of the Africans; it is the religion that has been handed down from generation to generation by forebears of the present generation of Africans. Mountains and Hills are part

of the monuments inherited from the forebears and are regarded as creatures of *Olodumare.*

The history of African communities is intricately associated with some natural formations, such as hills, mountains, rivers and lakes. Such formations are so revered, that in certain cases, they may be deified and celebrated on an annual basis to honour them. Examples are the *Oke-Ibadan* (Ibadan), *Orosun* (Oke Idanre) and *Osun* (Osogbo) festivals. The *Orosun* and *Oke-Ibadan* festivals are in honour of hills in both places and are both associated with crop harvest. There are spiritual blessings when prayers are made on such mountains. Women that suffer from infertility receive answers to their prayers on mountains. Children later conceived are named after mountains like *Okebunmi, Okeseyi, Okedele,* and *Olokede*

It is necessary to mention that environment is an important factor in the location of human settlement. In Yorubaland, therefore, topography was of great importance to the historical determination of human abode, especially during the period of civil and religious wars. During these times, people settled on hilly and rugged areas so as to take refuge from the attacks of more powerful groups. Such hilly settlements included Idanre, Ikare, Ado-Awaye, Igbeti and Igbajo. Indeed, the establishment of Igbajo during the Kiriji war could not be in doubt. The town situated within the hills was founded by the cooperative effort of Oyo and Ijesa people, as the name of the town implies. According to Ekunade and Oluwole (1998), up till today, the people of Igbajo and Otan-Ayegbaju speak the Oyo and Ijesa dialects.

The establishment of Ibadan on a hill during this period should also be noted. It served primarily as a collecting centre for refugees and subsequently became so militarily important during the nineteenth century that it was the site of victory during the Ijaye war. Indeed, the establishment of some settlements on hills was so impressive that T.J Bowen writing about such sites asserted that nothing but the terror of war could have planted such settlements in such places as they were found.

The end of the Yoruba warfare also witnessed the abandonment of some settlements by the original inhabitants for the new

settlements they founded. Most of the settlements in this category were those situated on the hills. The abandonment of such settlements in the Western part of Yorubaland has been well documented by Gleave. According to him, it appears that most of the hill settlers moved downhill primarily as a result of the restoration of peace. It is also known that such hill settlements could no longer satisfy the yearnings of the inhabitants with regard to expansionist and farming activities. Ekanade and Oluwole (1998) further gave the example of Ado Awaye, from which the people immediately started to move after the Kiriji/Ekiti parapo peace treaty. Other towns that moved after the war were Oke-ho, Eruwa, Igbeti and Idanre. It is observed that the new settlements were better planned than the abandoned ones.

During the Ekitiparapo war in Yorubaland, the mountains were used to study the movements and the placement of enemies. It was a good strategy for wining a war against an enemy. The mountains were also a good source of water for the people. For example, the waterfalls resort centre at Erin-Ijesa, Osun State, takes its source from the Yoruba hills that surrounded the town. The fall supplies un-interrupted water to the town and her surrounding communities. Another example is the Oyo Alafin water works reservoir which is situated on Soro Hills.

Hills are found useful and regarded as sacred phenomena in both Christianity and African traditional religion. They were created for the use of man by God. The Christians and adherents of traditional religion in Yorubaland are making adequate use of them to achieve their religious satisfaction. Ekanade and Aloba (1998) concluded their paper that 'those who settle near a high mountain, hill or rock will feel the urge to worship the spiritual powers believed to be inherent in such phenomena.' Apart from religious usefulness, it is also noted that mountains/ hills are germane politically.

Conclusion

God in demonstration of his omnipotence, created *Ori-Oke (*mountains and hills) to show his attributes of greatness. Man, as his

creature, adequately makes use of these phenomena for his religious, political and socio-economic well-being. In other words, the environment created by God for man would not be adequate without mountains/ hills. It is therefore necessary for man to maintain them properly and adequately. The use of 'man' here is not gender-sensitive.

We conclude this piece by quoting Mbiti (1969) that, 'God is omnipresent, and He is reachable at any time, and any place people worship Him, where and whenever the need arises.' In other words, God can be worshipped on a mountain, hill, church, synagogue, river bank, crossroads or thresh holds of their houses. Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity told the Samaritan woman in the Gospel of John that 'a time will come, however, indeed it is already here, when the true (genuine) worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth (reality), for the Father is seeking just such people as these as His worshippers.' (Amplified Bible) John 4: 23.

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Chapter 2

Society, Religion and Social Change in the Context of *Ori-Oke* Prayer Culture: A Sociological Perspective

Bashiru Salawu

Abstract

In the process of living their lives, all human beings need a society and its constituent institutions to function well as cultured people. This is unconsciously done within the rules and routines of the society in which they live. The human society, therefore, provides the framework that shapes and moulds human behaviours. These important functions of shaping and moulding are done through the mechanism of institutions such as the family, kinship, marriage, economy, politics, law and religion, to mention but a few. While all the above mentioned institutions are important for the functioning of human society and the survival of its members, this paper only examines the characteristic compatibility between social structure (society), religion as an institution, and religion's capacity to bring about change in human society with particular attention to mountain-top prayer (here-in referred to as Ori-Oke prayer), which is fast becoming a universal culture among Christian populations. Some of the key questions the paper focuses on include the following: has religion ever contributed to the modernization of human society and the liberalization of humanity? Is religion (of whatever type) a motivating force in the struggle for social change? What role has mountain-top prayer culture played in changing the society in which it exists?

Introduction

Available literatures in the field of sociology have shown that there is an intimate relationship between society and the social institutions which it generally contains. For this reason, the human society is important to sociologists, as it serves as their workshop. The significance of society in the life of individuals is certainly unlimited. First and foremost, it provides the framework within which groups

and institutions function. In return, these groups and social institutions help to maintain the society. The importance of human society is made more obvious by looking at the nature of human beings that live in it. By nature, human beings at birth are helpless to meet their own needs by themselves. What this implies is that human beings at birth need others to protect and nurse them (through the process of socialization). Therefore, for human beings to be sustained, they need care, while they are in the process of learning how to take care of themselves. The reason for this is that human beings are not genetically programmed to take care of themselves, and therefore, they must undergo a prolonged, complex learning process in order to become functional human beings.

The implication of the above illustration concerning the import of human society is that human beings need persistent association with other human beings. This association is made possible by what we call society. The question here is, how does the society perform this function of turning the genetically limited human beings into functional human beings? To adequately perform its functions, the society is equipped with some mechanisms which sociologists called social institutions, which are used to shape and direct human behaviours in positive directions. These institutions include: the family, education, health, politics, religion and legal institutions. This explains why society is occasionally defined as the system of institutions which govern behaviour and provide the framework for social life. There is no doubt that all the institutions as enumerated above are important, as they all perform the function of maintaining the social system (society). But without underplaying other principal societal institutions, our concern in this paper is religion. Therefore, the relationship between religion and society with particular reference to *Ori-Oke* (mountain) prayer culture and its consequences, will be discussed in the remaining part of this paper by focusing on the aforementioned questions.

What is Religion?

First and foremost, it is important to mention at this starting point that there is no universally accepted definition of religion. The reason for this lack of universal definition is that it is a phenomenon that means different things to different people at various historical epochs. Thus, religion is a phenomenon that is so diverse in historical development and so culturally varied that its definition also varies from one place to another. Consequently, a definition of religion in one clime cannot be adequate enough to capture what religion is in another environment. Yet, we need a working definition to achieve the objectives of this paper.

The term 'religion' according to Bouquet (1973) in his book, 'Comparative Religion,' has European origin. With this, one would have expected that the term would have a universal meaning. In spite of the common origin of the word 'religion,' it still does not have a universal definition. Even ancient scholars differed on the etymological connotation of the term 'religion.' (1997: xvi) sees religion as an institution that draws people together in common enterprise of life, while Bouquet (1973), in his own interpretation, sees religion as a communion between human and superhuman. From this simple definition of religion, he interpreted religion to mean a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the Sacred, the Supernatural, the Self-existent, the Absolute or simply put, 'God.' However, in this paper, we will rely on the definition of religion as given by Giddens. Religion is, therefore, defined as a cultural system of commonly shared beliefs and rituals that provides a sense of ultimate meanings and purpose by creating an idea of reality that is sacred, all- encompassing and supernatural (Giddens, 2012).

Religion and Social Change: Evidence from Sociology

The role of religion in bringing about change in the society also finds support in sociological imagination. Since the inception of sociology as an academic discipline, scholars in this field have

engaged themselves in theorizing about how religion has been a factor in bringing about social change. The theories that emerged from their various thoughts include: the functionalist theory of religion, the Weberian theory, the Marxist theory, conflict theory of religion, rational choice theory of religion and the Durkheimian theory of religion. While all the above theories have one thing or another to say about the role of religion in the transformation of human societies, the emphasis will be on the Weberian theory of religion and social change.

From the functionalist perspective, sociologists are generally interested in the social impact of religion on individuals and institutions. The functionalist believed that since religion is a cultural universal, it is not surprising that it plays a basic role in human societies. These roles are termed 'the manifest and latent functions.' The Weberian theory is a move from the Marxist theory of Religion. For Karl Marx, the relationship between religion and social change was clear. Religion, according to this school of thought, impedes change by encouraging oppressed people to focus on other-worldly concerns, rather than on their immediate poverty or exploitation. But Max Weber, unconvinced by this argument, carefully examined the connection between religious allegiance and capitalist development. His findings are contained in his pioneering work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, first published in 1904. Weber noted that, in European nations with Protestant and Catholic citizens, an overwhelming number of business leaders, owners of capital and skilled workers were Protestants. In his view, this was no mere coincidence. Weber, in his work, pointed out that the followers of John Calvin (1509-1564), a leader of the Protestant Reformation, emphasized a disciplined work ethic. In other words, this Protestant leader emphasized a worldly concern and rational orientation to life, which have become known as the Protestant Ethic. One major outcome of this ethic was a drive to accumulate savings that could be used for future investment.

The spirit of capitalism as used by Weber contrasted with 'the moderate work hours,' 'leisurely work habits' and lack of ambition that he saw as typical of the times. Like Durkheim, therefore, Weber

demonstrated that religion is not solely a matter of intimate personal beliefs. He stressed that the collective nature of religion has consequences for society as a whole. From the above theoretical position, it can be seen that religion has been, and will continue to be, a powerful factor in the transformation and liberation of the human race. According to Giddens, religion has three key elements, namely, religion as a form of culture, religion as a form of ritualized practices, and religion as a mechanism that provides a sense of purpose to humanity. Religion from a functionalist perspective has remained a mechanism that performs a maintenance function for human society.

Religion and Social Change: Evidence from History

Since the inception of human history, and at various stages of human development, human beings have encountered one religion or another. That is, God has, at different times, sent the great teachers, variously called the God's Messengers, or Great Teachers, or Prophets, to mankind for one purpose or another. In the words of Baha'u'llah (1983), men at all times and under all conditions, stand in need of someone to exhort them, guide, instruct, and teach them. This is perhaps the reason why God has sent forth His messengers, His prophets and the chosen ones, that they might acquaint the people with the divine purpose.

These unique individuals, who were the prophets of God, had influence on human civilization. Their teachings brought about freedom for their peoples. For instance, Moses (a prophet of God) came to liberate the people of Israel who, over a long period of captivity, were divided and scattered in the hands of the tyrannical king. Before the coming of Moses, the Children of Israel were scorned and despised by all. With his religious teachings, he led those lost people out of the shadows of ignorance and into knowledge and perfection. Consequently, Moses gathered Israel's scattered tribes into the shelter of the unifying and universal Word of God.

Similarly, Jesus Christ appeared in the world at the time when the Jewish nation was in the greatest abasement. Without wealth, power

of armies or prestige, Jesus Christ rescued the Jews and lifted them to the highest plane of development and glory. In the same way, the savage peoples of the Hijaz, before that flame of prophet-hood was lit in the lamp of Mecca, were the most brutish and benighted of all the peoples of the earth. But after the light of Muhammad rose over them, they were changed completely from what they used to be. Like the prophets before him, the hitherto brutish people then attained a high degree of human perfection and civilization. From the activities of the above-mentioned prophets of God, it can be seen that religion as put by Baha'u'llah (1990)

> …is a radiant light and an impregnable stronghold for the protection and welfare of the peoples of the world, for the fear of God impelleth man to hold fast to that which is good, and shun all evils. Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue, and the lights of fairness and justice, of tranquillity and peace cease to shine.

Historically, therefore, religion has been found to be an important mechanism through which societies have been transformed with their attendant civilizations.

Ori-Oke Prayer Culture: Its Development and Structures

The *Ori-Oke* concept originated from the time of Moses, when he was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land (Exodus 20: 1-7). God requested that Moses come up to meet him on the mentioned mountain, so that he could hand over the Ten Commandments through which the people could be guided. From that moment, Moses made it a point of duty to visit the mountain anytime he wanted to talk with God. This experience was followed through by several other prophets in the Bible such as Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, etc. Some of these prophets lived on the mountains permanently where they communed with God. Jesus Christ also followed this traditional practice, beginning with the forty day and night fasting and prayer that he did. Initially, he undertook this

responsibility alone by withdrawing from the disciples and followers into the mountain to seek the face of God for fellowship, renewal and instruction. Most often, this exercise was carried out overnight, meaning that it was always done after the day's job. He, Jesus Christ, eventually introduced the disciples into this practice through mentoring. Initially, he started with three of the disciples, Peter, James and John, by taking them along and requesting them to stay a bit far away from his own location to pray along with him (Mark 9). In addition, he also used the moment of this withdrawal to teach the disciples separately from the followers. A uniqueness of this mountain prayer is that it doesn't attract distractions. The mountain is a place of loneliness without any distractions from things of this world. The present day Christians have also followed this example. Many of them now troop to these *Ori-Oke* sites for various spiritual purposes, as individuals and groups, to pray for the fulfilment of their desires.

Ori-Oke (Mountain Top Prayer) sites are reserved mountains that Christians dedicate for making prayers and supplications to God. They are usually a large natural elevation of the earth's surface, rising abruptly from the surrounding level. Most often, they are located in the remote areas of towns and villages where adherents travel to seek the face of God. Examples of such *Ori-Oke* prayer sites include: Ori-Oke Baba Abiye at Ede, in Osun State; Ori-Oke Sobi in Ilorin, Kwara State; Ori-Oke Erio in Ekiti State and Ori-Oke Igbala in Oshogbo, Osun State, to mention but a few. Some *Ori-Oke* have resident worship centres and each has a resident spiritual leader, who is generally referred to as *Baba Ori-Oke*. The *Baba Ori-Oke* is in charge of the church as a pastor, and the worshippers visit him to seek prayer support and direction as a prophet pertaining to individual problems being faced. The *Baba Ori-Oke* equally has some other people (Sons of the Prophet) who are trainees under him. Each *Ori-Oke* has its rules and regulations that must be strictly followed by visitors who come to pray or seek for the spiritual support services of the Resident Prophets on the *Ori- Oke*. Some of these rules are put in place to encourage cleanliness, order, seriousness of purpose and accountability.

Ori-Oke Prayer Culture: Impacts on the Host Communities

From the foregoing, it can be seen that religion, which has been described as a form of human culture, has brought about changes to human societies. Right from time immemorial, as a dynamic institution, religion and religious practices have continued to change. Hence, the emergence of *Ori-Oke* (mountain top prayer) culture. The existence of the *Ori-Oke* in many parts of Nigeria has impacted in many ways the societies or communities in which they exist. Indeed, the *Ori-Oke* prayer culture has socio-economic and psychological values, as it brings about so many other activities and human interactions that transcend the spiritual purpose and relevance attached to this sacred place of worship.

A visit to *Ori-Oke* site will commonly show any visitor the economic relevance of such site to the host community. For instance, the continual influx of people to *Ori-Oke* has led to the opening of markets by the host community for the people to buy supplies that make their stay in this location comfortable and pleasurable. In most cases, the opening of such markets has impacted the livelihood of the host communities. In addition, the *Ori-Oke* prayer culture also attracts development projects from government. In this case, hitherto host rural communities are being transformed into semi-urban communities through the provision of social amenities such as link road, borehole and electricity, in some cases.

Because of the large number of people that usually converge on the mountain top for prayer at times, the visitors to these *Ori-Oke* sites are able to learn about the culture of the host communities, especially when such communities are different from their own. What this means is that with the emergence of *Ori-Oke* prayer culture, some visitors are experiencing cultural transformation. From the psychological point of view, the atmosphere of many people coming in and going out of *Ori-Oke* sites often facilitate social interaction among the diverse people that visit *Ori-Oke*. Equally, the *Ori-Oke* prayer culture has become a mechanism by which people have been transformed spiritually. This is because a committed visitor to *Ori-Oke* is likely to come back with spiritual lessons that are likely to

influence his/her personality and attitude towards worldly things. What this means is that the *Ori-Oke* prayer culture has the power of social influence, motivation and conformity.

Conclusion

From the discussion so far, we have been able to see the sociological and historical evidences which show the contribution of religion to human civilization, modernization and transformation. In this regard, the mechanism of religion has always been a contributory factor to social change. This explains why both in the days of God's prophets and the emergence of *Ori-Oke* culture, societies have witnessed continuous change in religious spirituality and socio-economic transformation. Like the days of the Holy prophets, religious activities in these *Ori-Oke* sites continue to provide sources of livelihood to many in the host communities and other neighbourhood.

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Chapter 3

An Assessment of Muslims' Involvement in *Ori -Oke* Prayers in Nigeria

Adebayo, Rafiu Ibrahim.

Abstract

From time immemorial, humans have been looking for means of making spiritual ends meet. Searching for instant magical, miraculous and spiritual solutions to numerous challenges, they approach places with unique characteristics with the aim of receiving celestial interventions. They spot some venerated, historic places or personalities and approach them, believing that association with such places and personalities will help in the journey of finding spiritual solutions to their problems. While it is not easy to stop the close relationship between man and his environment because of their interdependence, exploration of the ecosystem by mankind has been moderated by religion to a large extent. This is in form of man's use of the constituents of the environment – water, mountains, plants, winds and animals – to achieve socio-economic, religious and spiritual benefits. This piece is an attempt to study the usage of mountains by mankind for spiritual development from the perspective of a Muslim. Historical and exegetical methods are used for this purpose. It is discovered that Muslims' involvement in Ori-Oke prayers is borne out of their dependence on historical facts about the usefulness of mountains for spiritual purposes as written in the Qur'an, though many of them are influenced by the Christians' active participation in Ori-Oke prayers. The paper, therefore, concludes that Muslims need to be well acquainted with the teachings of Islam on prayers, so as not to continue operating contrary to the dictates of their religion. This is because the Prophet has come to perfect Islam, and has warned against unnecessary innovations, imitations and practices which are not in consonance with Islam.

Introduction

Before the creation of the first man on earth, numerous creatures had been in existence including the angels, who devoted themselves to

active worship and adoration of Allah (Q.2: 30-33). Unaware of the essence of other creatures of Allah, the angels felt unsatisfied with the proposal of Allah to create a 'vicegerent' on earth. Allah thereafter manifested His purpose of creating human beings by endowing Adam, the first man with the knowledge of all things, and therefore, elevating him above the angels. Ability to discover the hidden treasures in Allah's creatures, and utilizing them effectively, are therefore, seen as a major way of worshipping and appreciating Allah. Indeed, this is the purpose of human creation.

Nigerians generally are lovers of prayers. This is manifested in the proliferation of prayer and miracle centres and the alarming rate at which places of worship are springing up in every nook and cranny of the country. Nigerians prefer taking their ailments to prayer houses than to hospitals. Indeed, many places of worship have become healing centres, while numerous radio and television programmes feature miracle hours with invitations from the 'anointed ones' for people to bring problems to them for spiritual solutions. A manifestation of the love of the Muslims for prayer is the high rate at which they flock *Asalatu* centres on Sundays and their involvement in mountain prayer, believing that such prayer is not alien to the teaching of their religion.

This study was embarked on to explore the scripture with a view to ascertain the significance of mountains to human existence and their usage by men. To achieve this, prominent mountains with spiritual relevance are discussed. This is used to examine the rate at which Muslims are involved in patronage of mountains for spiritual purposes, and this is analysed using Shari'ah template.

Mountains across culture and religions

One of the creatures of Allah appreciated by human beings is the mountainous environment. In human history, many mountains have been taken to be sacred, and are so guarded jealously to avoid desecration. The morphology of a mountain is considered by some as a means of determining its sacredness. For example, the shape, colour and height of mount Kailas in Tibet, are part of the factors

considered for its sacredness. The shape of the mountain is like a perfect dome, its colour is white and it is a source of four rivers in four cardinal directions
(http: www/un.org/en/events/mountainday). Also, a mountain becomes sacred when it is believed to have possessed certain cosmic power, influencing others in the environment and hosting certain spirits. Mount Olympus was considered sacred by the Greeks, who believed that it was the home of the gods (Berens, 2009: 3). In the same way, Mount Kenya was regarded by the Kikuyu, as the home of their great god, Ngai (Waita, 2013: 190). According to Hinduism, mount Kailas in Tibet hosts Shiva, the destroyer of evil and sorrow. As such, mountains are considered as places of spiritual transformations, and places of revelations, where 'god' communicates to special people. Worships are, therefore, directed to mountains in one form or the other. For instance, Hindus make pilgrimages to the base of the mountain as a form of worship; the Buddhists carry out their worship of sacred mountains in form of circumambulating the mountains (Hamilton, 2015: 135). In addition, in the Andean culture, human sacrifices are made on top of the mountain to appease gods. In 1999, some archaeologists discovered a beautiful teenager, at Incas, who was sacrificed more than 500 years ago on top of a 22,000ft volcano in Northern Argentina. Her mummified body is on display in a museum in Argentina. It was said that the girl was drugged with coca leaves and plied with alcohol, and was left to freeze to death high in the Andes
(https://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/aug/04/why-incas-performed-human-sacrifice). In appreciating the shapes of mountains, many Hindu temples including Angkor Wat, the principal temple of Angkor in Cambodia are built as symbolic representations of the mountain (http://www.livescience.com/23841-angkor-wat.html).

In Yorubaland, some festivals are attached to certain mountains. This is true of *Okebadan* festival in Ibadan, Oyo State; *Olumo* festival in Abeokuta, Ogun State; *Oke Iragbiji* festival in Iragbiji, Osun State and Oke festival in Ila-Orangun, Osun State (Abimbola, 2000: 58-62). These festivals are organized to commemorate the past heroes

and their founding fathers and to appreciate the provision and protection they got from the mountains in the history of their respective towns. According to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979: 73), *Oke-Ibadan* is a sacred place in Ibadan for the spirit of the hill, which the people believe assisted them in the war days and continues to bless them till now, while the Egba people of Abeokuta dedicate *Olumo* Rock to the spirit of the rock, believed to have protected them during war periods. In the same vein, *Orosun* festival is celebrated annually in Idanre, Ondo State during which sacrificial offerings to *Orosun*, the god of the highest peak on the hills, are made. The ancient people of Idanre held the belief that an ancient wooden structure made in form of a ship and placed on a flat hilltop is the 'Ark of Noah' (Philip, 2015). One can hardly believe this point, as it has not been historically asserted that the world had extended to Idanre as at the time of Prophet Noah.

In the Old Testament, Moses received the Ten Commandments from God Almighty while on a mountain. He used to retreat to the mountain to have communion with God, and it was on one such occasion that he eventually died (Deut. 34: 1-5 and Exodus 19: 10-12). Also, in Genesis 22, Abraham was ordered to sacrifice his son Isaac on a mountain in the land of Mariah. Several events in the New Testament equally show the spirituality embedded in the mountains. The longest sermon of Jesus Christ was delivered on a mountain (St. Mathew Chapters 5 – 7). In addition, the transfiguration and ascension of Jesus happened on a mountain, called Olivet (St. Mathew 17: 1-6). It is on record that Jesus was tempted by the devil who took him up to a high mountain; showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and promised to give him all these, if he should fall down and worship him (St. Mathew 4: 8-10). In view of these instances in the Bible, many African Independent Churches in Nigeria, have adopted retreating to mountains for spiritual purposes. Such include the Christ Apostolic Church, the Cherubim and Seraphim Church and the Church of the Lord, among others. In Yorubaland, many mountains are attached to prayers. Such include *Baba Shiloh* Prayer Mountain along Ibadan-Ife Expressway; *Ori Oke Irapada Oluwa*, Ibadan-Ife expressway; *Ori-Oke Atunse* Ibadan-Ife

Expressway and *Ori Oke Aluyo* in Afijio Local Government, all in Oyo State. It has to be noted that the Qur'an has some instances of the use of mountain. This shall be explained in the next sub-headings.

Mountains are said to have covered 22 percent of the earth's land surface and to have provided sustenance and wellbeing to 915 million mountain people around the world, representing 13 percent of global population, as well as indirectly benefiting billions living downstream. The importance of the mountains has been acknowledged universally. This explains why, since 2002, every 11 December has been set aside by the UN General Assembly as the International Mountain Day. Before this, in 1992, the UN adopted Charter 13 of Agenda 21, "Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development" at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which was a milestone in the history of mountain development (http: www/un.org/en/events/mountainday).

Mountains in the record of Islam

The Qur'an in many of its verses calls on mankind to find out the secrets of creation and make scientific investigation. As vicegerents of Allah, man is expected to identify, study, investigate and use the creatures of Allah for the realization of greatness of Allah. The following Qur'anic passage is pregnant with various areas of disciplines:

> Do they not look at the camels how they are created?
> And at the sky, how it is raised high?
> And at the mountains how they are fixed firm?
> And at the earth, how it is spread-out (Q. 88: 17-20).

The above verses mention the camels, which are object of zoology and agriculture; sky, which falls within the disciplines of meteorology and climatology and focuses on interactions, relationships and interrelationships of all heavenly bodies. The last two verses deal with the sciences of geomorphology and geology. Whereas geomorphology deals with the study of landforms that

comprise the physical landform of the life layer, including soil science or pedology, geology is the source science for an understanding of the processes and forms of the lithosphere (Tyabo, 2004: 37).

The word 'mountain' is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an 39 times, 6 in the singular and 33 in the plural forms. Mountains are also clearly implied as stabilizers for the Earth's crust in ten other verses (El-Naggar, 2003: 5). The mountain-referred verses are those which give descriptions of mountains, those which metaphorically emphasize the greatness of the mountain mass and solid nature, those which give the historic importance of some mountains, those which give the importance of mountains to both human beings and animals, those which give the supernatural and spiritualistic nature of mountains and those which describe the fate of mountains on the Day of Judgment (El-Naggar, 2003: 6).

The Qur'an mentions some benefits of mountains. One of such is that mountains serve as peg to anchor the entire earth and keep it stable. The following Qur'anic verses testify to this:

> And He has set up on earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you (Q16: 15).
>
> And the earth we have spread out (like a carpet), set thereon mountains (firm and immovable) (Q.15: 19).
>
> He created the heavens without any pillars that you can see; He set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you (Q31: 10).
>
> Have we not made the earth as wide expanse, and the mountains as pegs? (Q70: 6).
>
> And we have set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them, and we have made therein broadways (between mountains) for them to pass through that they may find their ways (Q 21: 31).

The above Qur'anic verses demonstrate the wisdom of Allah in creating mountains, so as to hold down the earth which was created like a carpet. Hence, different mountains located at different places in different continents serve the primary purpose of pinning down

the earth and preventing it from shaking. Mountains perform this role in form of controlling the weather of their environment; in the same way, the seas and lakes control the weather of their environment. Also, mountains serve as the controllers of winds blowing across the areas of their environment. The functions of the mountains are succinctly given by Yusuf Ali (1978: 1945) who submits:

> In the mountains we come to the utility to human kind generally in the services the mountains perform in storing water, in moderating climate, and in various other ways which it is the business of Physical Geography to investigate and describe.

As hilly, rocky, solid, hard and mountainous mountains are, they are miraculous, in the sense that they act 'as sponges to collect, store up, and filter sweet and wholesome water' (Tyabo, 2004: 75), and so serve as sources of springs and rivers. They also serve as water reservoir for many cities and towns. This is probably the reason why most of the city water-works preserve excesses of their water on mountainous areas, so that water could flow freely to the cities, even when there is a hitch from the main water works. The Qur'an confirms the mountain as a source of water when it reads:

> And made therein mountains standing firm, lofty (in structure) and provided for water sweet (and wholesome) (Q.77: 27).
>
> Thenceforth were your hearts hardened: they became like a rock and even worse in hardness. For among rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth, others there are which when split asunder send forth water; and others which sink for fear of Allah, and Allah is not unmindful of what you do (Q2: 74).

In addition to the above, mountains have been found to be reservoir of mineral resources, hence a source of revenue generation for the areas they are situated. The following Qur'anic verse testifies to this when it reads:

> Do you see that Allah sends down rain from the sky? With it we then bring out produce of various colours. And in the mountains are tracts white, and red, of various shades of colour, and black intense in hue (Q35: 27).

It has been observed that the crust of the earth is the reserve of minerals like silicate, while it also hosts abundant elements like the white veins of marble and quartz, or of chalk, red laterite, blue basaltic rock, ink-black flints and all the varieties of shade and gradation of colours (Tyabo, 2004: 76).

Historic and Miraculous Mountains in Islam

In Islamic history, some mountains are famous because of their historic importance. One of such mountains is Mountain Nur, which hosts the cave of Hira where Prophet Muhammad used to retreat to for meditation. From there, he was called to prophet hood, as Angel Jibril appeared to him with the first revelation. Mountain Thawr is another mountain in the outskirts of Makkah. The mountain hosts a cave where the Prophet and his companion, Abu Bakr, withdrew to during their migration to Madinah. The enemies came to the cave with one of their best trackers, who told them that the Prophet was in the cave. The Makkans did not believe this, as they were made to see cobweb on the entrance of the cave as well as eggs of a bird outside of it. They, therefore, did not believe that somebody could be there without disturbing the nest and breaking the web.

Another important mountain in Islam is Jabal al-Rahmah (Mountain of Mercy) popularly known as Mount Arafat. Visiting Mount Arafat is an important pillar of Hajj without which pilgrimage is not acceptable. Historically, the mountain is significant as it is considered the point of meeting of Prophet Adam, and his wife Hawa, after their years of separation, after their exit from Paradise as a result of having taken the forbidden fruit. It was also on this mountain that the Prophet delivered his historic farewell sermons. Still related to Hajj are Mount Safa and Marwah, where pilgrims to Makkah perform *Sa'y* to commemorate the running of Hajar,

Prophet Ibrahim's wife, between the two hills of Safa and Marwah in search of water for her baby, Isma'il. Prophet Muhammad used to stand on mount Safa to call people to Islam (Al-Mubarakpuri, 2002: 100).

The mountain of Abu Qubais is highly historic in Islam. It is generally regarded as the first mountain created by Allah. Prophet Ibrahim stood on this mountain to call mankind to come and worship in the Ka'abah after its completion. The mountain, which is located directly opposite the Ka'abah in Makkah, is believed to have been the mountain that Abdul-Muttalib withdrew to, when Abraha Ashram entered Makkah to destroy the Ka'abah. In the same vein, it is on record that it was on this mountain that the Prophet performed the miracle of the splitting of the moon. It was on the top of this mountain that Prophet Muhammad made his first public preaching of Islam, and when Makkah was eventually opened, Bilal was said to have made public calls to prayer (*azan)* on the mountain (Al-Mubarakpuri, 2002: 467).

In Islamic history, the battle of Uhud was said to have taken place around the mountain of Uhud. This was the mountain where the Prophet placed about forty Muslim archers, and instructed them not to leave the place on any account. They, however, ignored the instruction by abandoning their post and running after booty. This caused serious havoc to the *Ummah*, as most formidable warriors, particularly, an uncle of the Prophet, Hamzah, lost their lives (Rahim, 1983: 17).

In the Qur'an, some mountains are prominent. The Qur'an makes reference to the *As-hab al-Kahf*, a group of young men who left their homes and entered a cave. There they fell asleep and were made to wake up after a few centuries. They realized the extent of their sojourn in the cave when one of them was sent to the town to get food and was told that the coins he brought were used a few centuries ago (A Group of Muslim Scholars, 2003: 47).

The mountain of Sinai in Egypt is also referred to in the Qur'an. The mountain, which is visited by Jews, Christians and Muslim tourists, was where Prophet Musa conversed with Allah and received divine commandments (Hamilton, 2015: 135). Another mountain

mentioned in the Qur'an is Mount Judi, where the ark of Prophet Nuh came to rest after the Tufan's episode. It is interesting to note that it was a mountain that Noah's son ran to for safety, and from there he met his waterloo. It was also a mountain that Noah's ark rested on after the flood, and Noah and his people were saved.

The Dome of the Rock is a sacred place in Jerusalem from where the Prophet ascended to heaven in the Night Journey (*Mi'raj*). It is considered the third holy place in Islam after Makkah and Madinah. The rock is believed to have been the site of the Holy of Holies in the temple of Solomon, and it initially served as the direction (*qiblah*) of the early Muslims, before the Prophet was commanded to change his direction to Ka'abah (Glasse, 2002: 60).

Apart from the above, the Qur'an informs about the attempt of Prophet Musa to see Allah physically, as he could no longer endure hearing the words of God alone. Allah informed him to set his gaze on a mountain, and if he could withstand gazing it, he would be able to see Him. Prophet Musa attempted to look at the mountain, and he instantly fainted. This episode is succinctly captured in the Qur'an thus:

> And when Musa came at the time and place appointed by Us, and his Lord (Allah) spoke to him; he said: "O my Lord! Show me (Yourself), that I may look upon You." Allah said: "You cannot see Me, but look upon the mountain; if it stands still in its place then you shall see Me." So when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He made it collapse to dust, and Musa fell down unconscious. Then when he recovered his senses he said: "Glory be to You, I turn to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers.")
>
> (Allah) said: "O Musa I have chosen you above men by My Messages, and by My speaking (to you). So hold that which I have given you and be of the grateful." (Qur'an 7: 143-144).

In addition to the above, Prophet Ibrahim wanted to ascertain how God could enliven the dead. He was ordered by Allah to look for four different birds, slaughter them, remove the feathers, tear the birds to pieces, and mix them up. He was asked to place parts of the

mixed pieces on four or seven hills. Allah then commanded him to call each of the birds by its name. He did this, and plainly witnessed miraculously how the feathers, blood and flesh of these birds flew to each other to collect their head from Prophet Ibrahim (Qur'an 2: 260).

The mission of Prophet Salih also has some connection with a mountain. It was said that, as a condition for them to accept his preaching, his people led him to a mountain and demanded him to pray to his God for a red-haired she-camel ten months pregnant to appear from the mountain. He prayed, and the mountainside cracked so the people nearly lost their senses. He also prayed, and the camel gave birth to a young camel within a few minutes. However, the people of Salih met their waterloo when they violated the condition for the survival of the she-camel, which they found unbearable to them, and so killed the camel (https://www.al-islam.org/hayat-al-qulub-vol-1-allamah-muhammad-baqir-al-majlisi/salih-his-she-camel-and-his-people).

Prayer and its conditions in Islam

It is inherent in man to aspire to rise to moral and material greatness. Man in search of means to achieve his unquenchable desires, realizes that he needs to be in touch with a higher being for him to achieve his desires. A major means of communicating with God is prayer. The term *Du'a'* which means supplication, is considered the sword of the Muslims. Many verses of the Qur'an testify to the efficacy and significance of prayers for human beings (Q2: 186 and 40: 60). There are also instances of different human challenges and trials, which were solved through supplications in the Qur'an. For instance, the Qur'an 21: 76-91, identifies Prophet Nuh to have cried to Allah to save him and his family from the great distress, while Prophet Ayub prayed Allah for the relief of serious ailment he was battling with. Also, Prophet Yunus supplicated for safety when he found himself in a whale, while Prophet Zakariya prayed for a child. The prayers of these personalities were answered

by Allah. For prayers to be answered in Islam, some conditions need to be fulfilled. These include:

i. Belief in Allah: The Qur'an says: 'When my servants ask you about me, I am indeed close to them. I listen to the prayer of every supplicant, when he calls on Me. Let them also listen to my call and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way' (Q.2: 186).

ii. Supplication with humility and secrecy: The Qur'an says: 'Supplicate your Lord humbly and secretly. He loves not transgressors' (Q. 7: 55).

iii. Avoidance of perpetual committal of sins, *haram* sustenance, hastiness; tiredness and giving up.

iv. Following Islamic etiquette and manners of supplication like facing the *Qiblah*, being in a state of *wudu',* raising one's hand, praising Allah and showering blessings on the Prophet before the *Du'a'*, preceding with seeking forgiveness for past sins, maintaining full concentration while supplicating, crying and praying quietly, among others.

v. Giving out *sadaqah* before, or after supplication to the needy or destitute.

vi. Being optimistic that your supplications will be answered by God (Al-Ghazali, 1998; Abu Yasir, 2001).

In addition to the above, some periods and times have been specified as periods during which supplication are answered. Such periods include the last part of the night, when the call to prayer is on, between *adhan* and *iqamah*, during prostration, when the Imam ascends the pulpit on Friday, during Ramadan, on the Night of Majesty (Laylatul-Qadri), on the day of Arafah, the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, and when the rain is falling, among others. In the same vein, some special places have been identified as places where supplications made are instantly answered. Such places include prayers offered at the Ka'bah and the Prophet mosque, both in Makkah and Madinah, respectively. The prayer offered at Mount Arafah is equally believed to be efficacious.

Innovative Prayer Strategies of Muslims

In order to make their request quickly acceptable and answerable to Allah, different prayer strategies are adopted by the Muslims. Some prayers are developed and prescribed to be recited at a particular prescribed time, for particular ailment or challenge. For instance, the *Rih al-Ahmar* is a prayer meant for curing stroke, and such ailments which can lead to dumbness and deafness, poverty alleviation and opening of good fortunes, while *ayatul-Qursiyy* is to be read 21 times at night, or in the morning with the *khutbah* attached to it, to be read seven times or more (Bello, undated). In addition, some *nawafil* are prescribed with certain verses and chapters. The author of a prayer book prescribes for a person praying for abundant wealth to observe a two *rakat* prayer in the outskirt of the town, on a remnant of fell tree *(kukute)*, read some supplicatory prayers and *khutbah* and slaughter a white cock as *sadaqah* (Bello, undated). Other Qur'anic chapters and verses with various prescriptions include *surat-Yasin* (Q.36)*, Duha* (Q.93)*, Masad* (Q.111)*, Zilzilah* (Q.99)*, Ta Ha* (Q.20)*, Fatih* (Q.48) and *Ikhlas* (Q.112). At times, some of the Qur'anic verses are mutilated and disjointed in anticipation of quick and miraculous acceptance of prayers.

In addition to special times for prayers to be accepted, Muslims have adopted various means of meeting their spiritual needs. Intercessions are made through invocation of names of prophets, angels and saints. Numerous names of *jinn* are equally contained in the prayers of some Muslims, all in the name of making their prayers quickly acceptable to Allah.

It is not out of point to say that some people decide to go into retreat in secluded areas, *khalwah,* for them to attain spiritual development by reciting different types of prayer books (oral interview with Shaykh Jamiu Jibril, a Qadiriyyah Sufi leader in Ila-Orangun). Some of them choose places they feel are sacred to pray, believing that prayers offered in such places become quickly acceptable to God. The annual pilgrimage of the Shi'ites to Karbala is an example of a place believed by the Shi'ites to be sacred. The Shi'ites celebrate Karbala to commemorate the brutal assassination

of the Husayn, grandson of the Prophet, and also believe that prayers offered there receive quick response by God. Millions of people are said to make the pilgrimage to Karbala annually. In the same vein, Bosnian Muslims celebrate the anniversary of Ajvatocica near Prusac, a village around 80 miles north-west of the country's capital, Sarajevo. It was believed that the legend of Dedo Ajvaz, their great grandfather, left his home and withdrew to a mountain where he stayed for forty days, praying to see the end of a long period of drought that was threatening the community. There and then, the large rock began to tremble, and it finally split and water started gushing out of it. To commemorate this happening, both the Muslims and Christians in the community celebrate the day by retreating to the mountain to offer prayers http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2352105/.

In Nigeria, it is interesting to note that some places have been sanctified because of their historic importance, in their respective communities. For instance, it is apposite to make reference to Oke Suna in Ilorin, the Kwara State capital. Historically, Oke Suna was a small village where Islam was prominent before the coming of Shaykh Alimi. The early Muslims in Ilorin were forced to migrate to Oke Suna to save themselves from the persecution of the unbelievers and to allow them to concentrate on the practice of their religion. The group was led by Shaykh Solagberu with other great scholars like Shaykh Sanusi, Shaykh Muhammad Yanbau and his wife Asi'ah (Al-Ilori, 2014: 55). When Shaykh Alimi eventually came to settle in Ilorin, he was said to have spent a month at Oke Suna, before retreating to Asin and Ikobo. He was said to have also prescribed a month's fasting, broken daily, with fruit alone, while the *suhur* (early morning meal during fasting) was taken only as a meal that had no meat or anything from living animals (Al-Ilori, 1982: 21). The efficacy of the prayer offered then, and at that place, resulted in people rushing to the place individually and congregationally to offer prayers at the spot. Today, Muslims are found on mountains in their search for instantaneous answer to their prayers. Such prayer sessions are mostly organized by the Christians, though some are also managed by Muslim individuals and organisations.

Factors which influenced Muslims involvement in Mountain Prayers

The mountain is undoubtedly an object of contemplation for mankind to draw inspiration from and for spiritual purposes. This explains why the Qur'an severally makes reference to it for the purposes. In this vein, SayyidQutb (undated) writes:

> ...a mountain is a refuge and a friend. In general, it always looks majestic and awesome. Next to a mountain, a man appears small and humble. It is natural for a man on a mountain to think of God, and feel himself nearer to Him. He feels a distinct detachment from the petty concerns of his worldly life. It was neither a vain whim, nor a coincidence that Muhammad (peace be upon him) should go to the cave on Mount Hirā' for periods of worship and contemplation, before he was given God's message. It is also not surprising that those who want to spend a period in self- purification should seek to do so on a mountain.

The above notwithstanding, the choice of a mountain as venue for special prayers by some Muslims is motivated by some factors. Our investigation on why people patronize mountains for spiritual development reveals that some retreat to mountainous environments with the intention of emulating prophets like Musa and Muhammad, who received divine message while on retreat on a mountain. They thus believe that prayers on the mountain assist in spiritual revival and in having direct communion with God. Some believe that they should visit a particular mountain, where prophets and saints had contacts with God, so as to have the same experience by praying on the same spot where great men of God also prayed.

Also, those who go for prayer on the mountain believe that retreating to mountainous areas assist in concentration and getting free from distractions. Mountains, to them, offer havens of peace and serenity away from the bustle of the city. They, therefore, find spiritual solace and inspiration on the mountain because of its

solitariness, which provides opportunity for concentration and privacy.

It is not an exaggeration to say that many Muslims, who go into mountain prayers are ignorant of the teaching of their religion. They, therefore, innocently patronize some Muslim priests who claim to have certain spiritual power and ask them to come to a mountain for spiritual solution to their problems. Some even go to mountain prayer sessions organized by the Christian priests, not minding the dictate of their religion on such practice, because they believe that both Muslims and Christians are worshipping the same God. Governor Rauf Aregbesola, who was allegedly accused of trying to Islamize Osun State, was publicly seen at a vigil in Oke Maria in Otan Ayegbaju, kneeling before a priest to receive spiritual blessings in his ambition to go for second term in office. Interestingly, his rival for the same post, Iyiola Omisore was also there to pray for victory in the governorship election (http://naijanewsroom.com/aregbesola-omisore-worship-at-annual-oke-maria-vigil/).

The alarming rate of poverty in Nigeria and attempts of people to find spiritual solutions to the menace has made many mountains centres of efficacious prayers. This opportunity has also been used by some priests to organize prayers on mountains, possibly because of the special features of mountains, or because of certain historical importance of such mountains. Commercialisation of religion by religious priests has also motivated some to make prayer on mountain attractive to people. A mountain, therefore, becomes a venue to which people flock to find spiritual solutions to their problems. Interestingly, such people who make religion their business are making financial fortunes from it. From his personal experience, Idowu (2015: 205) narrates how in a Prayer Mountain programme, the pastor raised money at every segment of the programme and did not call for repentance from the congregation throughout the five days of the programme. He observes that, in some places, certain packages like handkerchiefs, books and personal items of the pastors were handed out to the donors for pledging.

Mass media is another factor that influences Muslims' patronage of mountain prayers. Virtually every day, religious programmes are

aired on radio, where churches and individuals sponsor one programme or the other. In many of these so-called religious programmes, some so-called men of God are out to eulogize themselves, attributing certain miraculous power to themselves and inviting people to their camp and to mountain prayer sessions slated for certain time of the day (Abioje, 2011). To convince their listeners, they allow people to reach them on phone and through prophesies made by the priests to the callers. Some are convinced and so decide to join the mountain prayer session wherever it is slated.

Finally, there is no denying that many Muslims who organize Prayer Mountains are influenced by the Christians. While, some have 'genuine' reasons for providing alternative opportunities to Muslims to patronize Muslim spiritualists and divert attention from the Christian-organized Prayer Mountains, some do so to create a certain spiritual impression about themselves to their followers. They, therefore, design some prayer formats for certain days and to be said at certain mountains.

From the above, it can be seen that the Muslims who patronize mountains can be divided into two. While some do so purposely for prayer, others go there for economic reasons. Those who go there for prayers are active participants in the programme, while those who go there for commercial reasons go there with their wares to make money from those who attend the prayer session.

However, it has been observed that some go to the mountain with ulterior motives. Some pseudo-prophets are on the prowl on the mountains to deceive and exploit people, misleading their followers and taking property unjustly. In addition, some hoodlums have been taking advantage of the multitude to carry out their nefarious activities. Omotoye (2011) cited an instance where a young man tried to rape a lady on a mountain.

Ori-Oke prayers within the context of Shari'ah

In our preceding discussion, we have identified some conditions for validity and acceptance of prayers in Islam. One needs to assess

the practice of moving to a mountain to pray within the context of Shari'ah. This is discussed using the following templates.

Where to observe (Place): Islam has identified some places or venues where certain religious rituals are carried out. For instance, the five canonical prayers are expected to be observed in a mosque, while *hajj* is expected to be performed in the Holy land of Makkah and Madinah. *Tawaf* is expected to be carried out in the Ka'bah, while *sa'y* is to be observed between Safa and Marwa. For spiritual development, Islam recommends *I'tikaf* (retreat) which is expected to be observed in the mosque. To withdraw to the bush, river bank, or a mountain, therefore, will be considered a *bid'ah* (innovation). This explains why the Sunni scholars consider *Khalwah* (retreating to a secluded place for spiritual development) un-Islamic, as it was not practised by the Prophet and his companions. To situate one's prayer to a particular place not islamically prescribed is out of context, as the Prophet had not specified that it may be done. If the Prophet had moved to the cave of Hira for meditation, it was before he became a prophet and received revelation. Since then, it is not on record that he moved to the mountain again for meditation. Neither did his companions, during his time and after him. This implies that prayers could be offered anywhere, but once they are restricted to particular place, it becomes a *bid'ah*. It is interesting to note that withdrawal to a mountain to worship as practised by some Muslims, may not necessarily be for spiritual reasons, but for other reasons best known to them. This is because Prophet Muhammad did not order his companions to withdraw to a mountain for supplication.

It needs to be mentioned that prayers at Mount Arafat are recommended and many pilgrims have testified to the efficacy of prayers said there. This, however, is not a licence for all mountains to become places or venues for prayers. This explains why historic mountains like Uhud, Thawr and Abu Qubays are not made venues for special supplications.

When to observe (Time): In Islam, there are some religious activities which have specific time for their observation. The five daily prayers, for instance, have their timings. Ramadan fast is observed only in the month of Ramadan. Supererogatory fasting

could be observed anytime of any month. To introduce a particular time for observance of a supererogatory act, which the Prophet had not specified before is, therefore, considered a *bid'ah*. In this way, organizing special prayer on a mountain at a specific time of the day, month or year apart from the one divinely prescribed in Islam is seen as an innovation which has no room in Shari'ah.

How to observe (Mode of Observation): This involves the number of what to say and the mode of saying such a supplication. It is observed that the Prophet prescribed certain forms of *adhkar* (oral form of remembrance of Allah) and the number to be said. To now come up with another version of *dhikr* with prescription of a particular number to be said is regarded as *bid'ah*. Indeed, to have a prescribed cloth or uniform for a particular form of *dhikr* is out of Islam. In the same vein, except for *tarawih, 'id, janazah* and *istisqa'* (special prayer to ask for rain), which are performed congregationally, and have their modes of operation, there is no other voluntary prayers prescribed to be said congregationally. In that way, organizing any special prayer in congregational form to be said in a special place like a mountain can be considered an unnecessary innovation.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, Nigerians are lovers of prayer though they hardly comply with the conditions attached to it. Many places of worship spring up on a daily basis, while 'Ministers of God' advertise their products everyday – miracles, prosperity and protection against evils. Rather than taking advantage of their natural resources with which they are blessed, Nigerians proclaim and eulogise the name of the Provider, forgetting that they need prayers only when they please the Provider. The love of prayers has blindfolded them so that they cannot strike a balance between prayer and work. When other nations are working tirelessly to invest in technology, agriculture, industrialization, education and massive infrastructural development, Nigerians are busy praying and putting up gigantic places of worship. The resultant effect of this is aptly captured by the Vice-chancellor

of the University of Ibadan, Professor Abel Idowu Olayinka (2017) when he writes:

> After our prayers, God being a wise God decided to reward us according to our labour… That's why today, Nigerian Pastors are competing in building the biggest churches. That's why people rush to prayer houses and worship places than hospitals and schools. That's why people rush to prayer houses for medical and business solutions instead of hospitals. That's why we don't do business feasibility before jumping into it since we are going to back it up with prayers, and when it collapses, we blame devil. That's why it's a sin to say anything negative about Pastors and Imams. That's why our Pastors don't consider the opinion of engineers while building and blame devil when the building collapses. That's why faith replaces building pillars and when it collapses, we blame it on Lucifer….

The above notwithstanding, there is the need for a constructive appraisal of the Muslims' involvement in mountain prayers by all the stakeholders in the practice. In other words, it has become urgent and important for Muslims to chart a new course for their modes of supplication in view of contemporary realities. Such an appraisal should focus on a self-assessment of their sore relationships with God, which make them far away from God in actions, but wanting to move closer to Him spiritually through the medium of a 'sacred' place. God's unconditional command, "invoke me and ask Me for anything, I will respond to your invocation" (Q 40: 60), is not ambiguous. Hence, unanswered prayers should be considered a lapse on the part of the supplicants, not on the part of God. This was hinted by the Prophet, who mentioned a man who was on a long journey, looked unkempt and dusted, raised his hands to the heaven and said 'Lord, Lord,' while he fed on forbidden things, took forbidden drinks, put on forbidden dress and was fed with forbidden food. The Prophet then wondered how his prayer could be accepted by Allah. Allah is pure and accepts nothing save what is pure. It, therefore, demands that for valid and efficacious prayer, the supplicant must be pure in mind, body and deeds. No matter how

holy or sacred a place of supplication is, it demands pure mind of the supplicant for his supplications to be instantaneously accepted. Where the supplications of the unrighteous and impure ones are answered, this should not be seen as Allah's love for them, or because of the venue such prayers were offered, but a form of respite and trial.

It also needs to be mentioned that not all supplications made on mountainous environment are efficacious. After all, both Omisore and Aregbesola, who were governorship aspirants in Osun State prayed on Oke Maria. While one realized his dream, the other lost gallantly. This sends a signal that mountains have no special efficacious power, but the grace of God.

Moreover, one will do a great service to mankind, if he realizes that mountains are signs of Allah, meant to be explored to derive economic, social and other benefits from, by exploring their usefulness to better the lot of the environments where they are situated. Turning them into places of worship will not fetch the human race any fortune. Though some people derive economic benefits from mountain prayers, it is our belief that some mountains could fetch government, at different levels, revenues, if they were made attractive to tourists. Meditating on mountains for spiritual benefit could be acceptable as well, if is not turned to a venue of worship, aside from those mountains that have been islamically sanctioned for the purpose. On a final note, Muslims should desist from embarking on any spiritual endeavour not sanctioned by the Prophet; they should stop unnecessary imitation of practices of people of other faiths. After all, other people have their own practice, while the Muslims have their own ways of doing theirs.

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Chapter 4

Materialism or Paradise: A Psycho-Spiritual Inquiry of why people go to Prayer Mountains in South-West, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The phenomenon of prayer is a universal phenomenon that can be found in all human societies and religions. Prayer appears in one form or another in every human religion and society. However, the forms, times and places of observing the prayers differ among the religions. Despite these differences, there is a particular place known as the Prayer Mountain that is common to most religions, especially Islam and Christianity. Many Muslims and Christians do go to the Prayer Mountain to pray. Although much has been discussed and written about the benefits of Prayer Mountains, little consideration has been given to the psycho-spiritual motive of going to the Prayer Mountains. The paper, therefore, explains the psycho-spiritual reasons for why people go to the Prayer Mountains in South-West Nigeria. A descriptive survey method was used for the study, while quota sampling was used to select respondents for the survey. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. It was observed that many people go to the Prayer Mountains because of worldly things or materialism. Hence, there is need for the believer to believe strongly in life after death, as this will go a long way in making them more righteous to practice the religion the way it ought to be practiced.

Introduction

Prayer is one of the components of religious worship. Through prayer, human beings interact and link themselves with the supernatural beings. Prayer is thus a connecting link between the two worlds: the natural and the spiritual worlds. In prayer, we connect ourselves to God and seek a deeper and more meaningful purpose in

our lives (Hamman, 2012). It would be difficult to overstate the importance of prayer to religion, for it is a belief and a ritual at the same time (Mauss, 2003: 22). The importance of prayers, according to Zarabozo (2009), lies in the fact that no matter what actions one performs in life, the most important thing is one's relationship with God, that is, one's faith, God-consciousness, sincerity and worship of God. This relationship with God is both demonstrated and put into practice, as well as improved and increased, by prayer. Therefore, if prayers are sound and proper, the rest of the deeds will be sound and proper; and if the prayers are not sound and proper, then the rest of the deeds will not be sound and proper.

Communicating with an unequalled deity is nearly a universal and an integral part of many religions around the world. Prayer is a universal aspect of religion, whether of primitive peoples, or of modern mystics, that expresses the broad range of religious feelings and attitudes that command human relations with the sacred or holy. According to the American philosopher William James, without prayer, there can be no question of religion. An Islamic proverb states that to pray and to be Muslim are synonymous, and Sadhu Sundar Singh, a modern Christian mystic of India, stated that praying is as important as breathing. Hence, it can be said that without prayer, there would be no religion (Hamman, 2012).

However, the forms, times, and places of observing prayer differ among religions. To some, a religion's prayer can be done by anybody, anytime and anywhere. Some ritualize the act of prayer, requiring a strict sequence of actions, or place a restriction on who is permitted to pray, while others teach that prayer may be practised spontaneously by anyone at any time. For example, while Islam forbids observing *solat* in a burial ground and also forbids menstruating females to perform prayer, Christianity allows a menstruating woman to go to church to worship.

Despite these differences, there is a particular place known as the 'Prayer Mountain' that is common to most religions, especially Islam and Christianity. People across religions have traditionally revered mountains as places of sacred power and spiritual attainment

(Okyere, 2012). Many Muslims and Christians do go to the Prayer Mountain to pray for different reasons and requests.

In fact, many people no longer find solace in the Christian and Muslim hope of eternal life. Signs of total submission to capitalistic tendencies, especially in insatiable material acquisition, loom large in Nigerian churches, mosques, Prayer Mountains, etc. Spiritual growth and moral sanctity towards better eternity is fast giving way to material craving, as the new idea of fulfilment of life and ultimate reality (Iheanacho, 2009). The majority of previous scientific investigations (Krause*, 2004*; Leibovici, 2001; O'Laoire*,* 1997, Michael, 1995) on prayer and Prayer Mountains have focused on their benefits. Also, most studies on Prayer Mountains used the qualitative data. Only limited attention has been given to the psycho-spiritual motives for going to Prayer Mountains, and few studies on Prayer Mountains use quantitative data. This gap is what this paper fills.

Conceptual Clarification

To enhance the understanding of this work, it is expedient for us to explain the concepts of prayer, Prayer Mountain and psycho-spirit.

Prayer

Prayer has been defined in different ways by different people. Some scholars attribute prayer to 'worship,' 'meditation' and 'supplication' (Hornby, 2001; Mairi, 1998; Ferguson, 1991). Prayer, according to Bounds (1984), has to do with the entire man/woman or his/her whole being, body, mind and soul. It takes the whole man to pray and prayer affects the entire man in its gracious results. Raheem (1992) looks at prayer as a second duty observed in devotional prayers five times daily. It is the worship of Allah in total submission to His will. Whoever abandons prayer has left the fold. Douglas (1963) says prayer includes all the attitudes of human spirit in its approach to God. Religious adherents worship God, especially when they adore, confess, praise and supplicate him in prayer. Prayer is also seen as a positive command which religious adherents are positively challenged to include in their daily religious or spiritual life.

It is on the above notion that Gbenda (2006) says that 'prayer is based on the conviction of the supplicant that there exists the transcendent or unmoved mover who is capable of influencing all the departments of life, and who has a relationship with man.' Thus, in prayer, man attracts the attention of the supernatural. Heiler (1958) asserts that prayer is the outpouring of one's mind and soul to God, a going out of one's self, a pilgrimage of the spirit in the presence of God.

The word 'prayer,' according to Stamps and Adams (1992), refers to the multifaceted communication of believers with the Lord God. Prayer can be described as a religious, or spiritual outreach of the temporal religious man, to the transcendent Being and his agents (Ekwunife 2007). Prayer is a result of God's established authority structure between heaven and earth, as well as a product of His faithfulness to His word. Prayer remains a very important aspect of religion. It has become one common ritual and practice in all religions of the world. It is mysterious and sometimes misunderstood amongst men (Munroe, 2002).

Prayer is also a result of God's established authority structure between heaven and earth, as well as a product of his faithfulness to his word. Prayer is as simple as respecting God's authority. Prayer is man giving God the legal right and permission to interfere on earth's affairs. Prayer is man giving heaven earthly license to influence earth. Prayer is a terrestrial license for celestial interference. Prayer is man exercising his legal authority on earth to invoke heaven's influence on the planet (Baribiae, 2014).

The Concept of Prayer Mountain

Prayer Mountain is a facility on a piece of elevated rock, for the purpose of fasting, prayer, and other spiritual functions. It is a secluded place of prayer for those who desire a place to be alone with God.

The Psycho-Spiritual Concept

Psycho-spiritual concept can be regarded as the application of psychology to things that are spiritual, that is, the psychological

analysis and explanation of spiritual events or happenings. It is the *interpreting* of the spiritual through psychological concepts. In other words, it is placing of the psychological applications into the spiritual arena. The term applies to the spiritualizing of psychology as well. It examines the relationship between the mind and spirituality (McMahon, 1994).

The psycho-spiritual approach embraces both a spiritual and conventional psychological theories of human growth to support the individuals on their particular journey. Psycho-spirituality is not only an inward turning journey, but also one of attuning oneself to the messages and meaning that comes from faith, cosmos, nature, interaction with others, etc. (McMahon, 1994).

Literature Review

The perceived nature, reasons and effects of praying at the Prayer Mountain have been analysed and discussed by different scholars from different perspectives. Okyere (2012) used the qualitative method to examine the relevance of the Abasua Prayer Mountain among the contemporary Christians in Ghana. His main objectives were to find out the spiritual beliefs and the reasons of Christians in Ghana going to the Abasua Prayer Mountain. He found out that the Christians in Ghana have a positive belief that when faced with difficult or insurmountable situations in day-to-day life, like the loss of a valuable, an incurable illness, a major financial problem, etc., people go to the Abasua Prayer Mountain to pray, and their prayers are always answered by God. He also discovered that the prayers are mostly about material or worldly expectations.

The quest to find a solution for every problem in life has increased the number of prayer groups of various inclinations in the churches and mosques today. Hence, most of the faithful are ready to travel miles, climb mountains, and visit whatever river once a solution to their problem is anticipated. It is equally true that the desire for wealth has led many to take to such prayer ventures as a means of livelihood (Okafor, 2008). Iheanacho (2009) asserts that many no longer find solace in the Christian and Muslim hope of

eternal life. Signs of total submission to capitalistic tendencies, especially in insatiable material acquisition, loom large in Nigerian churches, mosques, Prayer Mountains etc. Spiritual growth and moral sanctity towards better eternity is fast giving way to material cravings, as the new idea of fulfilment of life and ultimate reality.

Iheanacho (2009) examines critically the contemporary Nigerian Christianity. He used the phenomenological method and qualitative analysis to analyse the prayers among the contemporary Christians. He found out that emphasis on spirituality is difficult to notice when people are praying in recent times. He reports that the declining emphasis on spirituality and prayer for the eternal life is concomitant with the craving for materialistic and worldly things in the society. Apenda (2006) asserts that preference for faith by works (materialism) is diminishing spirituality towards eternal life. Many times, prayers from the clergy are preferred to confession to God. And, for fear of losing their clients, ministers of the gospel sometimes withhold the truth from the people.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Prayer Mountains in the South-West on Nigeria. The South-West of Nigeria is one of the six geo-political zones established during the reign of the then military head of state, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. The zone is made up of 6 states: Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo. The study population was male and female worshippers at Prayer Mountains in the South-West of Nigeria.

The descriptive survey method was used to generate data in the study. South West is composed of 6 states. All the 6 states were selected for the investigation with the aid of quota sampling method. The non-existence of a sampling frame (i.e. the list of all those worshippers who used to go to the Prayer Mountain) and the inclusion of respondents from various states in the study location, necessitated the adoption of a quota sampling technique in the survey exercise. To select eligible respondents, one Prayer Mountain was purposively selected from each state. Thus, a total of 6 Prayer

Mountains were selected from all the states in the South-West, Nigeria. The second segment involved using the purposive sampling to select forty (40) eligible respondents from each of the 6 selected Prayer Mountains. Thus, in all, two hundred and forty (240) respondents were selected for the study. It is imperative to observe that, after a thorough screening of each and every questionnaire returned, 202 questionnaires were found useful for the analysis. Thus, the analysis of the survey data in this study was based on the 202 questionnaires. The questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. The questionnaires used in the survey were administered only to people within ages 16-75. Statistical Packages for Social Statistics (SPSS/PC) Version 21.0 was used to analyse the data. The SPSS/PC was done after the returned questionnaires were edited and coded. The statistical methods employed in the analysis included the percentages, the mode, cross-tabulation and chi-square.

Results

Respondents' Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The sex distribution of the respondents shows that 53.5% (108) of the respondents were females, while 46.5% (94) were males. Data on age of the respondents shows that 31.2% (63) were in the age group 36-45 years; 25.7% (52) were in the age group 46-55 years; 22.8% (46) were in the age group 26-35 years; 13.4% (27) were in the age group 56-65 years, 5.4% (11) were in the age group 16-25 years, while 1.5% (3) were above 66 years. The majority of the respondents 78.2% (158) were married; 10.4% (21) were single; 7.9% (16) were separated, while 3.5% (7) were divorced.

Data on the respondents' education show that 53.5% (108) had had secondary education; 33.2% (67) had higher education; 10.9% (22) had primary education, while 2.5% (5) had no formal education. As for the occupation of the respondents, 27.5% (55) were private sector employees; 23.3% (47) were traders; 15.8% (32) were artisans;

14.9% (30) were priests; 13.4%(27) were civil servants; 4.5%(19) were housewives, while 0.9% (2) were retirees. It is important to note that 91.6% (185) were Yorubas, while 8.4% (17) were Igbos. Lastly, 73.8% (149) were Christians; 24.8% (50) were Muslims, while 1.5% (3) were traditional worshippers.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by their Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics

Socio-Economic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	94	46.5
Female	108	53.5
Total	202	100
Age		
16-25	11	5.4
26-35	46	22.8
36-45	63	31.2
46-55	52	25.7
56-65	27	13.4
Above	3	1.5
Total	202	100
Marital Status		
Single	21	10.4
Married	158	78.2
Separated	16	7.9
Divorced	7	3.5
Total	202	100
Education Qualification		
No formal Education	5	2.5
Primary Education	22	10.9
Secondary	108	53.5
Higher	67	33.2
Total	202	100
Occupation		
Trading	47	23.3

Artisan	32	15.8
Private Sector Employee	55	27.2
Civil/Public Servant	27	13.4
Retiree	2	0.9
Priest	30	14.9
Housewife	9	4.5
Total	202	100
Ethnic Group		
Yoruba	185	91.6
Igbo	17	8.4
Total	202	100
Religion		
Christianity	149	73.8
Islam	50	24.8
Traditional	3	1.5
Total	207	100

Source: Fieldwork (2017)

Table 2 contains information on how often the respondents go to the Prayer Mountain and the importance of Prayer Mountain to the respondents. From the table, 41.1% (83) of the respondents preferred to worship at the Prayer Mountain; 29.2% (59) preferred to worship in the mosque; 26.2% (53) preferred the church, while 3.5% (7) preferred to worship at home. 82.2% (124) of the respondents go to the Prayer Mountain very often, while 17.8% (78) rarely go to the Prayer Mountain. It is interesting to note that 62.9% (127) of the respondents believed they must go to the Prayer Mountain before their prayers can be answered by God. However, 37.1% (75) did not believe they have to go to the Prayer Mountain before their prayers can be answered by God. Virtually all the respondents 99.5% (201) asserted that certainly God answers prayer offered at the Prayer Mountain, while just 0.5% (1) did not hold the believe that surely God will answer prayers offered at the Prayer Mountain.

It is imperative to observe that 100% (202) of the respondents agreed that God answered their prayers every time they go to the Prayer Mountain to pray.

Table 2: Prayer Mountain, Pyscho-Spiritual Variables

Prayer Mountain, Psycho-Spiritual	Frequency	Percentage
Preferred place of worship?		
Church	53	26.2
Mosque	59	29.2
Prayer Mountain	83	41.1
Home	7	3.5
Total	202	100
How often do you go to the Prayer Mountain?	124	82.2
Very often	78	17.8
Not often	202	100
Total		
Do you believe you have to go to the Prayer Mountain before your prayer can be answered?	127	62.9
Yes	75	37.1
No	202	100
Total		
Does God answer prayer offered at the Prayer Mountain?		
Yes	201	99.5
No	1	0.5
Total	202	100
Often time, you go to the Prayer Mountain, do you pray for worldly things?		
Yes	166	82.2
No	36	17.8
Total	202	100
Do you believe there is life after death?		
Yes	200	99
No	2	1
Total	202	100
Often times you go to the Prayer Mountain, do you pray for forgiveness and God's mercy so that he can admit you into paradise when you die?	4	1.9
Yes	198	98
No	202	100
Total		

Source: Fieldwork (2017)

Question on whether the respondents always pray for worldly things, when they go to their mountain shows that 82.2% (166) of the respondents always go to the Prayer Mountain to pray for worldly things, while 17.8% (36) did not go to the Prayer Mountain to pray

for worldly things. Almost all the respondents 99% (200) believed in life after death, while 1% (2) did not believe in life after death. Lastly, very few respondents 1.9% (4) go to the Prayer Mountain to pray for God's forgiveness and mercy, so that God will admit them into the paradise when they die. The majority of the respondents 98% (198) declared that they do not go to the Prayer Mountain to seek for God's mercy and forgiveness.

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the quest for materialism and going to Prayer Mountain

H_1: There is a significant relationship between the quest for materialism and going to Prayer Mountain

Table 3: Materialism and Prayer Mountain

Prayer Mountain	Materialism		Total
	Positive	Negative	
Often	124	0	124
Not often	42	36	78
Total	166	36	202

X^2= 69.642 [a]; d.f. =1; P = 0.000

Decision Rule

The table above shows the cross tabulation of materialism and Prayer Mountain. The chi-square value of the relationship is (X^2) = 69.642[a], degree of freedom = 1, P= 0.000. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis that, there is a significant relationship between the quest for materialism, and going to the Prayer Mountain was accepted.

Hypothesis 2

H_0: There is no significant relationship between the quest for paradise and going to the Prayer Mountain

H_1: There is a significant relationship between the quest for paradise and going to the Prayer Mountain

Table 4: Paradise and Prayer Mountain

Prayer Mountain		Paradise		Total
		Positive	Negative	
	Often	4	120	124
	Not often	0	78	78
Total		4	198	202

X^2= 2.567 [a]; d.f. =1; P = 0.109

The table above shows the cross tabulation of the quest for paradise and Prayer Mountain. The chi-square value of the relationship is (X^2) = 2.567[a], degree of freedom = 1, P= 0.109. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis was rejected, while the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the quest for paradise and going to the Prayer Mountain was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The supposition which states that there is a significant relationship between the quest for materialism and going to the Prayer Mountain was accepted at $P < 0.05$. This finding corroborates the work of Okyere (2012), who found a positive relationship between the quest of worldly things and going to the Prayer Mountain. Okyere (2012) found that that the bulk of supplications people make to God, when they are on the Prayer Mountain, center on worldly things.

However, the hypothesis tested on the relationship between the quest for paradise and Prayer Mountain was rejected at $0.05 > P$. Thus, there is no significant relationship between the quest for

paradise and Prayer Mountain. This finding is in tandem with what was discovered by Iheanacho (2009) on prayer and spiritual growth and moral sanctity towards better eternity. He found out that there was no relationship between prayer and spiritual growth, and moral sanctity towards better eternity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study's aim is to examine the reasons why people go to the Prayer Mountain to pray. From the results of this study, it is established that the quest for worldly things is the fundamental reason why people go to Prayer Mountains to pray in South-West, Nigeria. Based on these findings, we recommend the following:

Believers should believe strongly in life after death, as this will go a long way in making them to be more righteous and practice their religion the way it ought to be practiced. Also, religious leaders should always emphasise the significance of paradise to the worshippers, and urge them to always seek for God's forgiveness and mercy, so that they can be admitted to paradise whenever they die.

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Chapter 5

Ori-Oke and Gender Patronage in Nigeria: A Socio-Political Analysis

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Abstract

Prayer Mountains in Nigeria are vital points where there are a convergence of quick interactions between the spiritual and the physical. The use of ***Ori-Oke*** *by attendees in recent times has gathered momentum as a result of the socio-political needs of the people. The goal of this paper is to analyse the patronage of Prayer Mountains from a gender point of view. Therefore, ethnographic research design was used to provide data as a research tool, while rational choice was employed as theoretical framework. The paper concludes by recommending that the government encourage more people to pray, using* ***Ori-Oke,*** *and that it improve upon the socio-political needs of the people, so as to enhance more gender patronage of the mountain prayers.*

Introduction

Mountain prayer in Nigeria takes place at a vital point where there is a convergence of quick interaction of spirituality with physicality. The spirituality is present at all places, but the special venue of *Ori-Oke* adds a dimension of extra power, spiritual consciousness and solitary awakening for the users. The idea of using the mountain as a venue to pray by Christians is borrowed from Jesus Christ (Mark1: 35). Other groups have diverse reasons for accessing the mountain for prayers.

The use of *Ori-Oke* to pray in recent times has gained more momentum among Nigerians. The reasons can be traced to socio-political needs. Social and political needs and rights of the people, such as right to good employment, right to live above the poverty line, social security, personal achievements, such as educational

achievements, marriage and child birth achievements are vital to people's lives. After the people perceived that their hope and aspirations on these social needs have been defied by government, legislature and policies, there is then an urgent need to find other means within the law, and their Christian faith, to solve such social and political problems.

The visitations to the mountains to pray is a way of stepping out from the convenience of conventional places of worship to a place where the liturgy and the order of service can be skipped for fervent and free style prayer modes. Many of the people that patronise the *Ori-Oke* do it at personal retreats, family seclusions and sometimes, as a collective change of location to pray by a group of people. The various groups of people that patronise the *Ori-Oke* are the Christians and other groups. Among the Christians patronisers are the prayer warriors, prayer seekers, prayer contractors, private pastors and divine seclusion or retreat seekers.

Among the other groups are the farmers for agricultural purposes (drying and winnowing) and the local groups, who have spirits and fetish consultation ambitions. However, the genders of the patronisers cut across both males and females, but tilts to one side majorly. It is noteworthy to say that both males and females are well represented on the *Ori-Oke*, and they all have peculiar roles to play on the Prayer Mountain. The males, in most cases, play the pastoral and prophetic roles, while the females play the prayer warrior and prayer seeker roles. In some cases, the reverse may be the case, where the female is the prophetess from whom the male comes to seek prayers.

This paper's primary focus is to analyse the patronage of the mountain prayers phenomenon from a gender point of view. Therefore, the question asked is which gender patronises the *Ori-Oke* most frequently and why? The ethnographic research design will be used to provide data, and there will be subsequent qualitative analysis of the findings. The theoretical framework of Rational Choice theory is used to justify the reason why people respond to spiritual things in different ways and why they choose the mountain to pray rather than other places.

Conceptual Clarification

The concept of prayer is reviewed in this study alongside the Prayer Mountain. It is important to note that most analysis and quotation here is from the Bible, the Christian Holy book (King James Version). This is selected because Christians are the biggest patronisers of the *Ori-Oke*. Prayer is a conversation with God; it is the interaction of the soul with God, not in contemplation or meditation, but in direct address to Him. Prayer may be oral or mental, occasional, constant or formal. It is a form of 'beseeching the Lord' (Exodus 32: 11); 'pouring out the soul before the Lord' (1 Samuel 1: 15); 'praying and crying to heaven' (2 Chronicles 32: 20); 'seeking unto God and making supplication' (Job 8: 5); 'drawing near to God' (Psalm 73: 28); 'bowing the knees' (Ephesians 3: 14), and going to the mountain (Mark 1: 38). Prayer presupposes a belief in the personality of God, His ability and willingness to hold intercourse with us, His personal control of all things, His creatures and their actions (Easton, 2006).

Acceptable prayer must be sincere (Hebrew 10: 22), offered with reverence and godly fear, with a humble sense of man's insignificance as creatures, and of man's unworthiness as sinners, with earnest importunity and with an unhesitating submission to the divine will. Prayer must also be offered in the faith that God is, that He is the hearer and answerer of prayer, and that He will fulfil his word. 'Ask, and ye shall receive' (Matthew 7: 7, 8; 21: 22; Mark 11: 24; John 14: 13, 14), 'and in the name of Christ' (John16: 23, 24; 15: 16; Ephesians 2: 18; 5: 20; Col 3: 17; 1 Peter 2: 5).

According to Fausset (2006), prayer, *in Greek proseuchee*, is for obtaining blessings, implying devotion, 'supplication' and *deesis*, for averting evil. 'Prayer' in the general term, 'supplication' means imploring earnestness (implying the suppliant's sense of need) and *enteuxis*, or interceding for others, coming near to God to seek an audience in person or on another's behalf. Thanksgiving should always go with prayer (1 Timothy 2: 1; Ephesians 6: 18; Philippians 4: 6).

Prayer is of different kinds. Easton (2006) noted that it can be secret (Matthew 6: 6); social, as family prayers and in social worship; and public, in the service of the sanctuary, or on the mountain. Intercessory prayer is enjoined (Numbers 6: 23; Psalms 122: 6; 1 Timothy 2: 1; James 5: 14), and there are many instances on record of answers having been given to such prayers, e.g., of Abraham (Genesis 17: 18,20), of Moses for Pharaoh (Exodus 8: 12,13,30,31; 9: 33), for the Israelites (Exodus 17: 11,13; 32: 11-14, Numbers 21: 7,8; Deuteronomy 9: 18,19,25), for Miriam (Numbers 12: 13), for Aaron (Deuteronomy 9: 20), of Samuel (1 Samuel 7: 5-12), of Solomon (1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 6: 1), Elijah (1 Kings 17: 20-23), Peter (Acts 9: 40), the church (12: 5-12), Paul (28: 8).

No rules are laid down anywhere in Scripture for the manner of prayer or the attitude to be assumed by the suppliant. There is mention made of kneeling in prayer (1 Kings 8: 54; 2 Chronicles 6: 13; Ps 95: 6; Isaiah 45: 23; Luke 22: 41, Acts 7: 60; 9: 40, and Ephesians 3: 14.), of bowing and falling prostrate (Genesis 24: 26,52; Exodus 4: 31; Matthew 26: 39; Mark 14: 35.), of spreading out the hands (1 Kings 8: 22,38,54; Psalms 28: 2; 63: 4; 88: 9; 1 Timothy 2: 8.) and of standing (1 Samuel 1: 26; 1 Kings 8: 14,55; 2 Chronicles 20: 9; Mark 11: 25; Luke 18: 11,13).

Mountain prayer is a phenomenon and a practice exemplified by Jesus Christ and his disciples at a place secluded from the general public, so as to make spiritual decisions. Matthew 14: 23 reveals that when Jesus had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray, and when the evening was come, he was there alone. The account in the book of Luke 6: 12 also noted that it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God. This scripture captures those who take shelter on the *Ori-Oke*. Luke 9: 28-29 also indicates the onset of collective prayer

And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.

Theoretical Framework

Rational Choice Theory

The rational choice theory, also known as choice theory, or rational action theory, is used to explain the reason behind people's choice of using the mountain as a place of prayer rather than other locations. It is a theory for understanding and modelling social and other individual behaviour. The goal of the rational choice theory is merely to describe choices, to generate predictions, to understand choice behaviour and to provide normative criteria for rationality. It is the central theory in microeconomics and modern political science, as well as other disciplines such as sociology and philosophy. The pioneering figure who established rational choice theory in sociology was Homans (1961), who set out a basic framework of exchange theory. He drew his inspiration from behaviourist psychology.

Becker (1976) recorded that 'the rational choice theory was popularized in social sciences.' Elster (1989) stated the essence of rational choice theory by noting that 'when faced with several courses of action, people usually do what they believe is likely to have the best overall outcome.' Ogu (2013) corroborated Friedman (1953) that the 'rationality' in the rational choice theory simply means that 'an individual acts as if balancing the effect of costs against benefits to arrive at action that maximizes personal advantage.' Rational Choice Theory is an approach that is usually used by social scientists to understand human behaviour.

The three assumptions made by rational choice theorists include Individualism, Optimality, and Self-Regarding Interest. Individuality means it is individuals who ultimately take actions. Individuals, as actors in the society and everywhere, behave and act always as rational beings, self-calculating, self-interested and self-maximizing. These individuals' social actions are the ultimate source of larger social outcomes. Optimality means that individuals choose their actions optimally, given their individual preferences, as well as the opportunities or constraints with which the individuals are faced. The rational choice theory, therefore asserts that individuals are in the best control of their circumstances. Self-Regarding Interest means

that the actions of the individuals are concerned entirely with his or her own welfare or warfare. Various types of group sentiments could exist, such as cooperation, unselfishness, charity, which initially may seem to be contrary to individual optimality.

Rationality is another idea that appears predominantly in rational choice theory. All individuals, according to this idea, act in ways that would benefit them more. Every individual is most likely to undertake courses of actions that they perceive to be the best possible option, one that would immensely be to their own advantage.

Certain steps which the rational choice analysis should follow in making decisions include: definition of the problem, identification of decision criteria, weighing the criteria, generation of valid alternatives rating of each alternative on each criterion and computation of optimal decision. These steps and other aspects informed the rational choice of people to pray as a measure of solving their problems, anywhere even on the mountains. Mountain prayer is a choice which individual participant has decided to make. Others may find it comfortable to stay in churches to pray, rather than the mountain. Others find solace in the action of Jesus Christ withdrawing to the mountain to pray. In fact, His last prayer was on Mt Olives, where He agonised in prayer as if His sweats were blood. The economic choice, relaxing choice, or the free prayer preference may also be another propelling rationality necessitating the mountain prayers.

Socio-Political Analysis of *Ori Oke* and Gender Patronage

It is no news in this 21st century that the level of socio-economic and political challenges in Nigeria is on the increase. These problems include ritual killings, kidnapping, armed robbery, assassination, political corruption, political hassles and riots, killings of relatives by other relatives, drug trafficking and the execrable state of the educational system, among others. In our quest for political and economic development, most people who have high moral principles and standards neglect them and behave otherwise. The myriad of challenges facing the polity seems to make her citizenry impatient and question the competence of her leaders. This has resulted in the

populace seeking divine intervention in the nation's socio-economic and political activities. Even the populace is not alone in these dilemmas: the political class, the clerics and researchers also believe in the need for divine intervention. In other words these groups of people believe that, through divine intervention, Nigeria's challenges shall be over.

This has resulted in people seeking divine help from different angles. Indeed, our society is famous for having more prayer warriors than any other country of its size on the planet. Her citizenry have acquired a higher praying gear, which means that citizens are more apprehensive than they normally are. The source of apprehension appears to be the polity, particularly the conflict between the politics of tradition and change. The situation in which the populace live is at a standstill. The challenges are so overwhelming, so perplexing and frustrating, they have led to people seeking solutions at Prayer Mountains known as *Ori-Oke*.

In the midst of unsatisfying state behaviour, legitimacy crises, pauperization and degradation of the environment, the voices of women in Nigeria have become strident both as victims and as potential healers. As Jesus restored the self-image of the unnamed woman suffering from a spinal disease, by calling her the daughter of Abraham, thus rooting her in everlasting covenant with God, so are Nigerian women. The posture here is that Christian women are breeds, rooted in the New Testament vision for the liberation of both men and women, thus enabling them to operate in their God-given capacity, by bringing the benefit of the Kingdom into the lives of communities.

Prayer Mountains were started by first generation indigenous churches across Nigeria. Their spread across some states of the South-West Nigeria revealed names such as *Ori-Oke* Aluyo, located at Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State; *Ori-Oke* Ikoyi, Osun state; *Ori-Oke Agbara Aseyori,* Osun State; *Akoko Mi* to Prayer Mountain, Ogun State; *Baba Shiloh* Prayer Mountain, Ibadan-Ife expressway, Oyo State; *Ori-Oke Irapada Oluwa*, Ibadan-Ife expressway; *Ori-Oke Atunse*, Ibadan-Ife Expressway, Egbeda, Oyo State; Rehoboth Prayer Mountain, Ajegunle, Ogun state; Ancient of

Days Prayer Mountain, Abeokuta Ogun State and *Erio* Prayer Mountain, Ekiti State, among others. Akinadewo (2016) believed prayer is communication between you and God. People go to Prayer Mountains to avoid distraction. It is like being alone with God. Jesus Christ took three of his disciples to the mountain during the transfiguration, and he taught and prayed with them there. In the Bible, Moses communicated with God on the mountain where he received the Ten Commandments. Aladeolu (2016), supporting Akinadewo's notion of the example of Moses, stated that the practice of praying on mountains has its origin in the Bible, and it offers spiritual importance. Praying on mountains helps a person focus on prayer unlike what occurs when there is a crowd.

In observing the activities that take place on Prayer Mountains, Makinwa (2016) stated that people have testified to miracles they received as a result of spending time on the Prayer Mountain. It is of interest to note that Prayer Mountains are patronized by all kinds of people: the rich, poor, educated and uneducated. Even students, bankers, celebrities and academics visit the mountain. Prayer Mountains not only provide a good environment for spiritual communication, they also have assisted to boost religious unity, because of their multi-religious nature. Prayer Mountains offer a spiritual venue for their participants, and provide a direct link with God in the spirit.

As a social and political being, the humans' uses of the *Ori-Oke*, are of both physical and spiritual purpose. The physical uses are characterised with agricultural purposes such as winnowing and drying of farm produce, hunting and other economic activities, such as mining of mineral resources and quarrying. The spiritual activities on the Prayer Mountain supersede the physical social activities in terms of popularity of patronage and usage. The spirituo-social activities are simply prayers, divinations and consultation by precedents based on the previous spiritual fathers' declaration.

The prayer activities, as an aspect of the social uses of the *Ori-Oke,* are most prominent and, at the surface level perception, are the goal of all the patronisers of the mountain. It is perceived that the mountain is the solid ground on which the church is built as Christ

Jesus told Peter (Matt16: 16-18). Therefore, prayers offered to God through Jesus Christ will be answered without hindrance as much as it is accompanied with faith. The divination activities, as an aspect of the social uses of the *Ori-Oke*, are secretly done and not in the most visible light. The symbols or objects of divinations on the *Ori-Oke* are usually pieces of rocks put together to signify a small pillar or altar. Other worshipers who construct the pillar usually use the rocks to invoke some spiritual divinities, but most likely in the name of God. Therefore, this spirituo-social usage is an act shrouded in secrecy.

The other aspect of the social uses of the *Ori-Oke*, in terms of the spirituo-social uses, is their consultation based on precedents set by the previous spiritual fathers' declaration. This is the belief that a great pastor of old had used this mountain before, and great wonders were performed through his ministrations. Therefore, people consult the same mountain to pray, and use the exact place the spiritual father of old used. This phenomenon is common to the mountains associated with Prophet Ayo Babalola across the Western part of Nigeria. People consult God on such mountains because the renowned pastor of old consulted God and succeeded on such mountains.

Typology of Gender Patronage of *Ori-Oke*

There is a cross circuit of patronage of the *Ori-Oke* among the male and the female gender. The typology below indicates the frequency and the time spent on the *Ori-Oke* by all the genders considered. From the ethnographical survey-participant observation, the following groups of people are classified to attend or visit the *Ori-Oke*: youth-female, youth-male, elderly men and elderly women. The age range of the youth-female is between 18-30 years, youth-male is between 18-50 years, elderly men is from 51 and above and the elderly women is from 31 and above.

The frequency of patronage of the group of youth-female between the ages of 18-30 years is very high, but the time spent on the mountain to pray is short. The very high frequency is due to the perceived need to pray and get their lives sorted out by God on

urgent needs such as marriage, security, education and job. However, the time they spent on the mountain to pray is short due to the desire to go and position themselves where their desired outcome of prayers can be achieved. Therefore, they come to Prayer Mountains frequently at some intervals, where they spend a little time, leave and come back to God on the mountain again until their prayers are answered.

The frequency of patronage of the group of youth-male between the ages of 18-30 years is low, but the time spent on the mountain to pray is longer than their counterpart youth-female between the ages of 18-30 years. The low frequency is their choice to first of all seek and sort out physical reality of lives before falling back on prayer, especially when their perceived set goals and needs are not met. Such needs are marriage, education, job and wealth. However, the time spent on the mountain to pray is much longer due to the strength and zeal to seek divine interventions and to be repositioned back on socioeconomic track. Once this is achieved, they hardly come back to the Prayer Mountain.

The frequency of patronage of the group of elderly men of ages 51 and above, is low and the time spent on the mountain to pray, is shorter than all other groups. The low frequency is their choice to be contented with their physical reality of lives due to their late age or carrier. They resort to prayer on the mountain especially when their perceived set goals and targets are not achieved, such as need for job satisfaction, marital challenges, and perceive spiritual attacks against their good fortune and wealth. The time spent on the mountain to pray is, as well short, just as the youth-male due to little strength and zeal to seek divine intervention and the desire to get spiritual answers to their physical problems faster than all other group.

The frequency of patronage of the group of elderly women above 31 years old is very high, and the time spent on the mountain to pray is longer than all the other groups. The very high frequency is due to the perceived need to pray for their family members, and their being meticulous about the peculiar needs of each person in the home. Also, as females and home organizers, whenever their set targets and goals are not manifesting on time for their present urgent needs, such

as family growth in terms of marriage, security for the children, education, good health or jobs that are at risk, the *Ori-Oke* as a choice of a place to pray is inevitable. The time they spend on the mountain to pray is very long due to the desire to solve all their problems at once and to have peace of mind and assurance that all their requests had been divinely attended to. Therefore, they come to Prayer Mountain frequently until there is divine intervention to their prayers.

The figure below shows the typology of the *Ori-Oke* frequency of patronage and the longevity of the time spent.

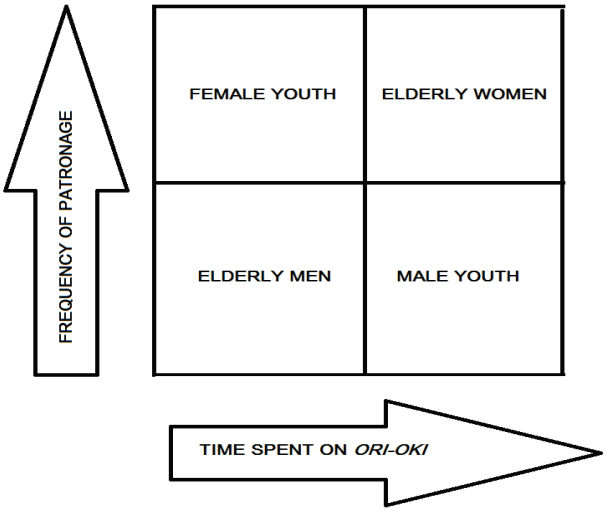

Figure I: Typology of *Ori-Oke* Gender patronage

Conclusion

The *Ori-Oke* phenomenon has come to stay in Nigeria. The act of praying, in recent times, has transcended a quiet and solemn ritual to a violent and verbose act. This is because of the impending troubles perceived in the polity and the regular hardship inflicted by the government over the people of the land. The regular ritual killing, ethnic cleansing and chauvinism and religion killing or killing in the name of god in Nigeria transforms gentle praying styles into a fervent

prayer manner. The new phenomenon of suicide bombing and nepotism in the government recruitment are also worrisome phenomenon which need urgent spiritual and divine attentions.

Most importantly, the main support of the *Ori-Oke* prayers is the wide spread poverty in the country and the failure of the state to cater to the basic needs of the people. The promises of the political parties and groups in charge of carrying out public good have been diverted using prebendal politics, patron client politics and godfather syndromes. The most potent way of getting divine intervention is for people to go out of the comfort of their homes to seek divine or spiritual satisfaction, peace and assurance.

This paper posited that the gender mostly involved in the mountain prayers is female. The elderly women have more time to pray for their family and the situation of the country, while the younger women with some family or economic challenges find their way to the mountain to seek divine attention. The young girls only go to prepare the way for their futures and to handle perceived threats to their lives and families. The males, as well, go the mountain, but their major duty on the mountain is to be a prayer convener to the women or a pastor who leads the people or group to the mountain to pray.

There is a great linkage between gender and mountain prayer patronage. The roles played by both sexes on the *Ori-Oke* are fairly different. The major reasons for such patronage as depicted in this paper are the socioeconomic reasons and failure of political promises by the government. It is the right of the people to seek solutions at places of prayer, at all times, regardless of the venue of the prayer, so far as it is within the ambient of the law. The reasons to retreat and the right to agonise in prayer on the mountain as exemplified by Christians and other believers are essential for spiritual and divine intervention.

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Chapter 6

Ori Oke and National Development in Nigeria: A Geo-Political Analysis

Aluko Opeyemi Idowu

Abstract

Ori-Oke, Prayer Mountains in Nigeria, are a rational phenomenon. They are a form of physical asset, spiritual arsenal, sacred geography and geopolitical utility which have benefited Nigeria. Several mountains for contestation of space exist in the nooks and crannies of Nigeria. These have been utilised for all kind of activities, ranging from economic to social, political and religious activities. The summation of the utilisation of this contestation of space, to a large extent, has brought about development. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to conceptualise the importance of Ori-Oke in Nigeria from geo-political stand point. Ethnographic research design was employed to obtain and analyse data. The paper, therefore, recommends to the government of all the tier levels and the Ori-Oke attendees, to optimally explore the geo-political benefits of the natural facilities. The paper concludes that, as man is a part of spiritual being, he needs spiritual things to survive and explore.

Introduction

Ori-Oke, mountain prayer, is a national heritage in Nigeria. Since mountains exist, man has taken shelter on them and within the caves that might be in them. Mountains are natural highlands above the sea and the low lands. Several activities, therefore, exist on the mountain so far as man's habitation has been shifted to the natural fortress. During periods of crises and inter-tribal wars, concerned communities escape to the mountains for refuge while purported enemies retreat from pursuing their victims.

In periods of natural disaster, such as floods and some epidemic outbreaks, the mountain has been a close and safe destination. The

mountain is perceived as a spiritual zone where the tides of evil are sent back, where the enemies of war are defeated and where sicknesses are not heard of. Therefore, to buttress the spiritual utility of man's interaction with the natural feature, special accolades are given to the mountain as a place where God grants safety, security and restoration of life when a person climbs it for the purpose of prayer.

Mountains are a form of physical asset, spiritual arsenal and geopolitical utility which have benefited Nigeria. Several mountains of various sizes and heights exist in nooks and crannies of Nigeria, so much so that a state is named after the mountains (Plateau State with Jos as the state capital). These have been utilised for all manner of activities ranging from economic to social, political and religious. The economic activities on the mountain range from tourism, to mining and quarrying. Others include hunting, sun-drying of farm produce and 'commercial praying' contractor sites. The political usage of the mountain includes geographical demarcation of landmarks and boundaries between communities and international states. The social and religious importance of the mountain is their use for sports such as mountain racing, climbing and diving. The religious aspect of the mountains is mainly the *Ori-Oke* prayers and the sightseeing of the natural wonders of God.

The summation of the utilization of this national heritage, to a large extent, has brought about national development. The economic teams in Nigeria have, to some extent, harnessed the tourist and recreational potential of the *Ori-Oke* to boost the economic activities of the area. Political crises arising from boundary disputes at the intra-state, interstate and national levels have, at times, been amicably resolved due to the use of a natural feature, such as the mountain, for boundary demarcation. These have promoted peace, which leads to a level of development in the affected states. The spiritual peace acquired from the prayers on the *Ori-Oke* is an immeasurable national benefit to the people and the entire state only for those who believe.

The objective of this paper is to conceptualise and classify the utility of *Ori-Oke* in Nigeria from a geopolitical point of view. Geopolitics was born at the end of the 19th century and reborn at the

end of the 20th century (Park 2004; Hide and Lushaj 2014; Voss 2014). It is usually applied to the analysis of international politics and globalization. A geopolitical analysis, in this paper, is the interdisciplinary combination of geography and political science to analyse the *Ori-Oke* phenomenon. The research question this paper seeks to answer is: How do *Ori-Oke* prayers enhance national development in Nigeria? The theoretical framework of Prayer Theory is used to justify the importance of mountain prayers. The ethnographic research design is employed to obtain qualitative facts and data.

Some of the most referent Prayer Mountains in South and Western part of Nigeria include: *Ori-Oke* Aluyo, located at Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State; *Ori-Oke* Ikoyi in Osun state; *Ori-Oke* Agbara Aseyori in Egbeda, Osun State; Akoko Mi To Prayer Mountain in Ogun State; Baba Shiloh Prayer Mountain in Ibadan-Ife expressway, Oyo State; *Ori-Oke* Irapada Oluwa in Ibadan-Ife expressway; *Ori-Oke* Atunse in Ibadan-Ife Expressway, Egbeda, Oyo State; Rehoboth Prayer Mountain; Ajegunle Prayer Mountain in Ogun state; Ancient of Days Prayer Mountain, Abeokuta, Ogun state; *Ori Oke* Aanu (Mountain of Mercy) Praying Ground; Erio-Ekiti in Ekiti State; Ido Ajinarere in Ido-Ile town of Ekiti West Local Government Area and *Ori-Oke* Babalola, in Odo-Owa, among others.

The geopolitical benefits of the natural facilities are essential to the local communities that house them. Many of the *Ori-Oke* have become tourist and prayer sites. The local communities' economy is enhanced and improved upon as the number of the Prayer Mountain users increase, and basic facilities are built around the mountain, such as guest houses. There is also employment of security guards, general cleaners and maintenance officers who attend to members. Food and some other essential prayer items are also provided at the foot of the mountain for would-be users. Another usage of the mountain for national spiritual benefit is that the state can send national, state or local delegates to the mountain to pray and retreat on spiritual matters, just like holy pilgrims, if their politics and governance are not translating into sustainable development and shared peace. However, the use of the mountain should transcend the prayers alone

and also include sporting activities and excursion tourism to develop and employ young talents.

Conceptualising *Ori-Oke*

Ori-Oke is a new concept in the academic circuit, but it is regular nomenclature in the circle of prayers and spiritualties. *Ori-Oki* is a Yoruba term which implies 'head of the mountain,' 'mountain head,' 'mountain top' and more religiously, 'mountain prayer.' Mountain prayer might mean other things in other languages across Africa and the world. It will be novel to perceive *Ori-Oke* from both phenomenon and feature perspectives. *Ori-Oke* is a phenomenon whereby the creature meets the creator for divine encounters on hard land higher than the regular plain lands, usually secluded for spiritualities.

Ori-Oke is a place where series of events takes place such, primarily prayers, but also trading activities and spiritual consultations. It is an organised meeting place where people visit for personal prayer retreats, due to the perception that divine encounters have occurred there in the past, when prominent religious leaders used them as fortresses and as a meeting point to pray, retreat and seek the face of God Almighty for divine help for themselves and others. On the other hand, it is an organised seclusion where a niche has been carved out for prayer contractors and neo-diviners to tell fortunes for people with perceived, unseen spiritual problems. This is usually to eke out a living and, to some extent, succour their clients.

As a feature and symbol of the supernatural signature on the surface of the earth, *Ori-Oke* is a geographical location where the land protrudes from the earth to a certain height or elevation to a top area (Prendergast 2005). The top area or the plateau is the usual point of convergence for *Ori-Oke* purposes. Generally, a mountain has no universal definition, but it can be perceived as a natural elevation of the earth's surface, rising more or less abruptly from the surrounding level and attaining an altitude which, relative to the adjacent elevation, is quite notable.

In Europe, the general perception of mountains as horrible and evil places began to change in the 1800s. The fear and mountain gloominess gave way to achievements and mountain glory. High peaks are celebrated as places of grandeur. Scientists made mountains less feared by explaining their natural origins. Prendergast (2005) noted that mountain climbers attempted summits in search of the aesthetic sublime are no longer feared; mountains became a place of inspiration, reverence and exhilaration. Byron referred to the Alps as 'palaces of nature.' Wordsworth walked the high ridges of the Lake District which was awed, delighted and amazed (Prendergast 2005). Enlightenment scientists such as Agassiz and Tyndall made mountains less fearsome by explaining their natural origins (Fleming, 2000). According to Raymo (2004), in the 1800s, there was a swing of focus from ignorant fear to unquenchable curiosity, from a world ruled by divine whim to a world that might be understood by the human mind.

As a prayer city, *Ori-Oke* is a mountainous land, where various groups, churches, families and individuals converge for a mission to pray. Prayer is a medium of communication with God. The *Ori-Oke* as a prayer city, in recent times, has taken a dimension of having other places other than mountain for prayers, but still named as *Ori-Oke*. This is a trend for people or worshipers who admire the mountains but for whom the distance to the feature is a barrier. It is also important to clarify that the various *Ori-Oke* have several names, usually the town's name, or the prominent pastor who made use of the mountain as a prayer fortress.

Theoretical Framework

Empirical research concerning the psychology of prayer has increased significantly in the last decade. In Judaeo-Christian society, prayer has always been recognised as a way of ameliorating distress. Thomas Aquinas, a major exponent of prayer theory discusses the nature of prayer in 'Summa Theologica', IIaIIae, q. 109, a. 2 ad 4 [1], distinguishing between *veracitas* and *simplicitas* as different forms of relating to truth. *Veracitas* implies a .Therefore, it is considered

relevant for a link to justice and the conscious confession of truth. *Simplicitas*, on the other hand, implies an uncritical and spontaneous relation to truth (*facitintentionemrectam*) (Karslake, 1912). It is on this concept of simplicity (with obvious roots in the New Testament) that an observation from 'Summa Theologica' was made that prayer is a rational and deliberate action and at the same time, a divine action, joining the body and soul together in divine contact (*Deotraditio et unitio* a. 1) in which divine nature can inspire the objects of prayer.

One question still remains to be considered, viz. what is the origin of the idea of the efficacy of prayer? Where has it arisen? How are we to account for the notion that prayer has the power to influence the Almighty God of the universe and to draw down a blessing from Him? Is it derived from natural instinct? Or, is it simply the result of an instruction or an example with each person training others to pray, and spreading by example the idea of the power of prayer? Now all questions on the nature of natural instincts or natural intuitions may be very difficult, if not impossible, to solve. The idea of the intellect, and the affections of the heart, does not come into existence. By analysing the category of attention in prayer, an interesting fact about the ultimate form of prayer is revealed. Prayer renounces self-perception, as if it were an act which could hinder the soul's accomplishment of divinity (Fenwick 2004; Baumgarten 2013).

Prayer is a widespread practice in the US. *Newsweek* found in a 1992 survey that nine out of ten Americans prayed at least once a week. In 1994, *Life magazine* found out the same proportion believed that God answers their prayers, while *Time* found in 1996 that 82% of Americans believe that prayer heals. In the last few years, there have been a number of high quality double-blind randomised control trials of intercessory prayer, the majority of which have been positive, and which have produced good supportive evidence that prayer is effective. Numerous other studies have shown the success of spiritual medicine in general. These studies come from a wide number of fields and deal with many aspects of religious and spiritual practice (Fenwick, 2004).

A study on prayer theory by Koenig, et al. (1999), for example, was able to show that church attendees were more likely to be alive

after six years. A further study by Koenig et al. (2001) has shown that over 65 year olds, who went to church at least once a week had lower levels of cancer and heart disease, suggesting an up-regulation of the immune system, and showing the beneficial influence on health of having a religious or spiritual belief. One of the most persuasive prayer studies is from the department of obstetrics and gynaecology at Columbia Hospital, New York, by Cha, Wirth and Lobo. Cha, et al. (2001) carried out a prospective double blind randomised control trial on the effects of intercessory prayer on in-vitro fertilization and embryo transfer in a group of patients in Seoul, South Korea. There were three praying groups: one in Australia, one in the USA and another in Canada. They prayed for the groups, showing higher implantation rates (16.3% against 8% for the control) ($p=0.0005$) and higher pregnancy rates (50% against 26%) ($p=0.0013$). The high significances suggest again that prayer is effective, and the fact that the people praying were widely separated from those they prayed for, suggests that action at a distance has to be postulated, and that some kind of intention to heal, on the part of those praying, crosses the space to influence the target group. This study is thus a parapsychological study on healing, and suggests the possibility of direct effects of mind beyond the brain, a possibility that must be considered in any current theory of prayer spirituality and consciousness.

Janssen, Hart, and Draak (1990), and Janssen, Prins, Lans and Baerveldt (2000), on the theoretical construct, distinguished four variants of prayer. These include the petitionary prayer, religious prayer, meditative prayer and psychological prayer. The petitionary and religious prayer are usually concentrated and directed towards God and they take place at a fixed moment in a church. The meditative prayer is focused on action and is performed anywhere and anytime. This classification easily encompasses the *Ori-Oke* prayers. The psychological prayer concentrates on concrete problems and needs, and it is mostly said at night. Janssen et al opines that prayer, for few young people, is a coping strategy against odds and irresolvable negative events so as to maintain a balance in life.

Geopolitical Analysis of *Ori-Oke* and National Development Enhancement

Geopolitics as a method of analysis was born at the end of the 19th century and reborn at the end of the 20th century, from the need to explain certain issues arising out of the general evolution of human society and the growing influence of permanent politico-economic changes on the human consciousness and the entire system of socio-political life and culture (Park 2004; Voss2014). Geopolitics gives us the opportunity to reflect on the manifestation and evolution of power relations within a particular historical period and to assess and track changes and trends in the current system of governmental relations, giving us indicators and analytical methods that allow us to penetrate into the essence of the reality of countries and their relations with their physical features such as the sea, air space, mountain and land masses (Ormerodand Riordan 2004). The geopolitical spread of *Ori-Oke* in Nigeria is mainly in the Southern and Western part; there is a spatial mountain in the North of Nigeria.

The spread of *Ori-Oke* across states of the South West include *Ori-Oke* Aluyo, located at Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State; *Ori-Oke* Ikoyi in Osun state; *Ori-Oke* Agbara Aseyori in Osun State; Egbeda Akoko Mi and Prayer Mountain in Ogun State; Baba Shiloh Prayer Mountain in Ibadan Ife expressway, Oyo State; *Ori-Oke* Irapada Oluwa in Ibadan Ife expressway; *Ori-Oke* Atunse in Ibadan-Ife Expressway, Egbeda, Oyo State; Rehoboth Prayer Mountain, Ajegunle in Ogun state; Ancient of Days Prayer Mountain, Abeokuta Ogun stat; *Ori-Oke* Aanu (Mountain of Mercy) Praying Ground; Erio-Ekiti in Ekiti State Nigeria; Ido Ajinarere in Ido-Ile town of Ekiti, West local government area; *Ori-Oke* Babalola in Odo-Owa, among others. They are geographically located across Nigeria and are used for prayers. Geopolitical analysis takes into account a nation's geography, and the inevitable consequences of that geography (Voss 2014). It analyses the political relevance of geographic feature and the effect on the human life. This analysis will be done under the classification of *Ori-Oke* (Prayer Mountain) into socio-political usage and typology of patronage and religiosity classification of *Ori-Oke* (Prayer Mountain)

Classification of *Ori-Oke* (Prayer Mountain) into Socio-Political Usage

There are various uses of the *Ori-Oke* in Nigeria, Africa and in other parts of the world. The utility of *Ori-Oke* can be broadly classified into two: the general usage and the specific usage. The general usage directly involves the government. These include the political utility, economic utility and social utility. The political utilities are for boundary and land demarcation between communities, intra-states, interstates and international communities. The economic utilities of *Ori-Oke* include quarry and mining sites, tourism and special attractions. The social utility is basically for sports.

The specific utility of *Ori-Oke* (mountain prayer) is for religious activities. These religious activities are collectively summed up as prayers. The prayers utility can therefore, be personal prayer utility or collective utility. The personal usage can be for ones' self, ones' family or the two together. The self-Prayer Mountain usage is sub-divided into two: prayer only and other motives. Theses motives include activities with economic motives: being prayer contractors, prayer helpers or mountain spiritualists. The mountain can serve as shelter for those who want to spend few days on the mountain. The family Prayer Mountain utility is also subdivided as the self-utility for economic motives and shelter. The collective utility is then divided into the family and other groups. The family and other groups' utility is classified as prayer only and other motives. The figure I below gives the pictorial Ori-Oke Prayer Mountain utilities.

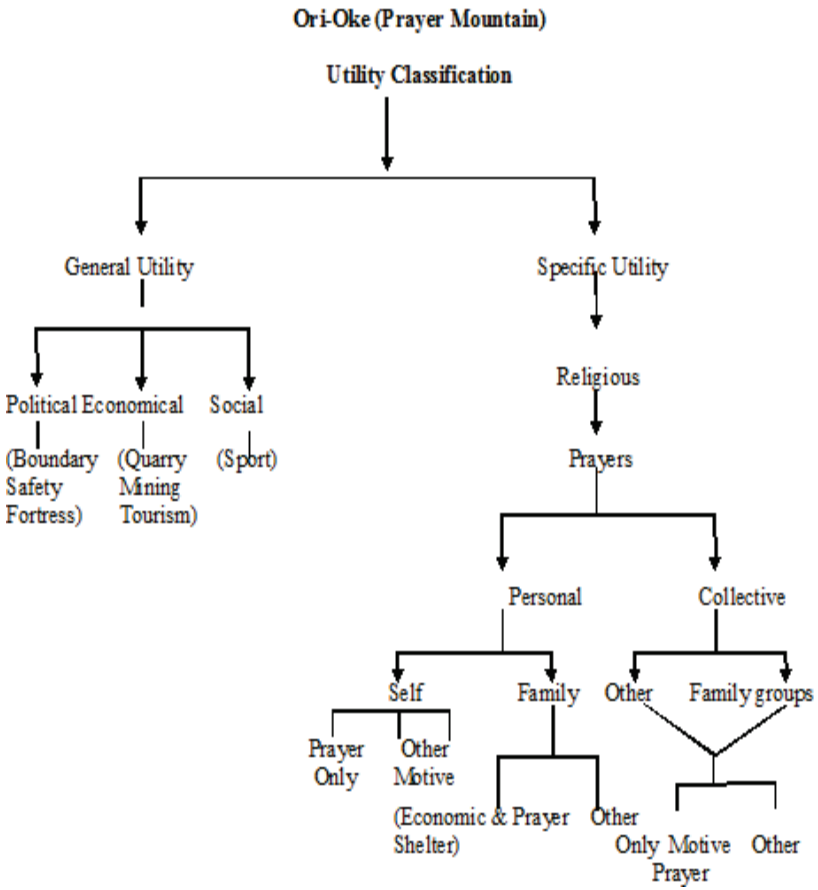

Figure I: Ori Oke (Prayer Mountain) Classification into Usage

Typology of *Ori-Oke* Patronage and Religiosity of Users (Prayer Mountain)

The typology of *Ori-Oke* utility in relation to national development is plotted out under the lens of patronage and religiosity. This typology clearly shows the type or group of people that patronise the *Ori-Oke* in relation to their level of religiosity. There are four typologies which depict the church or group of people. The first group is the group with low religiosity and low patronage. This group is consists of the Orthodox Church/groups. This is because they have other objects of worship, which are confined in other

places apart from the mountain. Their mode of worship is confined around the object of worship. The second group are those with high religiosity but low patronage. This group consists of the Protestants and the charismatic groups. They have high religious tendency, but their patronage level is low, because they are the very immediate offshoot of the orthodox groups. As a result, they have the same mind-set that the place of prayer should be somewhere other than the mountain.

The third group are those with low religiosity and high patronage. This group consists of the new generational group/church. They believe in mild religious radicalism and a new order of service. The group has more liberty to use other places of worship and prayer styles, such as the mountain, apart from the designated places of meeting. The fourth group are those with high religiosity and high patronage. This group consists of the indigenous or African churches/groups. They are a blend of the orthodox, protestant and the new generational groups. They believe in more religious radicalism and a new order of service. The group also has more liberty to use other places of worship and prayer centres, such as the mountain, apart from the designated places of their meetings.

All the four groups identified have various level of usage of the *Ori-Oke,* and therefore their level of contribution to national development via the mountain utility varies. It is depicted that the more they use the mountain, the more they contribute to national development via the mountain. This implies that the personal and collective utility classification all have a means of creating employment and resolving frustrations, disappointments and hardships accrued from state failure. Therefore, instead of causing acrimony and violence in the community, *Ori-Oke* Prayer Mountains are a place where the divine intervention is sort for state failure. When there is peace instead of frequent protest of the people, both individual and national development will be achieved in the country. Figure II, below, shows *Ori-Oke* Prayer Mountain patronage and religiosity typology which depicts the rate of patronage of the different groups in relation to their religiosity on the Prayer Mountain.

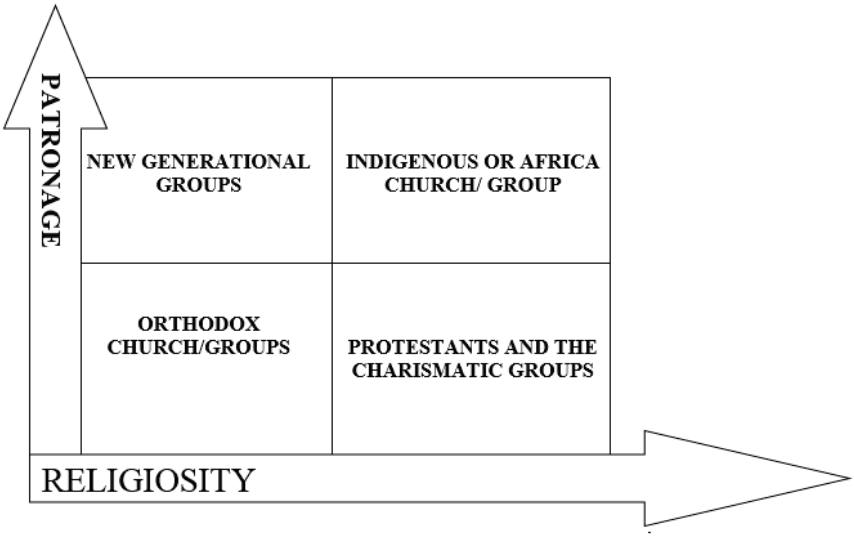

Figure II: showing groups patronising the *Ori-Oke* and their Religiosity

Conclusion and Recommendation

The following recommendations are proffered to the government at all levels and the *Ori-Oke* users, among other groups. The government at all levels can harness the benefits of the mountain prayer by encouraging its usage for prayers and intersession for the nation. This is because its usage has brought relief and calmness to the nerves of the aggrieved people, encouraging them not to disturb the peace of the community, but to hope in God for a better day ahead. Also, due to potential national peace that their usage brings, the government should ensure the various *Ori-Oke* are not encroached by government buildings, mining and other activities, which can disperse the user from the mountain.

The economic activities on the *Ori-Oke* have created employment for some users, thereby, relieving the government of the extra cost of unemployed people in the society. The buying and selling, consultation and spiritual satisfactions of the users should be ensured

by the government by making the *Ori-Oke* environment more attractive and less hazardous to the users. This can be done by writing adequate legislation to protect the lives and properties of the people at the *Ori-Oke* from harassments from any counter groups.

This will be accomplished when the motive of prayer is made more a priority than the economic motives. This will bring sanity to the *Ori-Oke* as places of prayers and not strictly business centres. Also, the families or groups taking shelter on the *Ori-Oke* should take responsibilities for securing and keeping the mountain clean. The communities closer to the mountain should harness both the social, economic and the religious opportunities of the *Ori-Oke*.

Ori-Oke Mountain Prayer is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria or Africa. Many groups of people patronise other places to pray apart from their conventional places of worship. The *Ori-Oke* are more popular among Christians in Africa than any other group, and their primary motive is to pray in a free style different from the regular church pattern of solemn prayers. Various groups visit the mountain for various reasons which include Spiritism, economic motives and social reasons.

This paper's objective is to conceptualise and classify the utility of *Ori-Oke* in Nigeria from a geopolitical analysis. Various dimensions and perspectives were raised in the quest to conceptualise *Ori-Oke*. These include perceiving it as a phenomenon, a feature and practice. The research question raised seeks answer to is how *Ori-Oke* prayers enhance national development in Nigeria. This was answered by the classification and typology analysis of the Mountain Prayer utility. The theoretical framework of prayer theory is used to justify the importance of religion as part of human needs and the mountain prayer as an inevitable avenue to pray for national development.

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Chapter 7

Religion and HIV/AIDS Campaigns: The Perceptions of Mountain Prayer Warriors in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

With the increasing number of people living with HIV/AIDS, there has been an increase in the number of studies on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. However, very few studies have focused on how religious constraints on sexuality may have consequences for the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Recognising that the incorporation of Christian religious tenets in STI campaigns may have a positive effect in reducing the prevalence of STIs brings about this research. This article strives to understand what and how basic Christian tenets can be incorporated into STI preventive communication campaigns in Nigeria. To achieve this study, 15 mountain prayer warriors residing in Sobi area of Ilorin, Kwara State, were interviewed to understand the basic Christian tenets that can be used to discourage people from engaging in risky sexual behaviour which could lead to prevalence of STIs; understand their position on risky sexual behaviour and investigate their contributions as a religious group towards minimising the prevalence of STIs. This study will suggest how religion can be incorporated into STI campaign development, implementation and evaluation in hopes of curbing STI prevalence.

Introduction

In Nigeria, like other sub-Saharan African countries, the rate through which young people are embracing Christianity is tremendous (Smith, 2004).The reason for this is that churches provide systems of meaning that are appealing to young people, especially to those who have migrated from their rural communities of origin to urban areas,

in search of further education, employment or business opportunities. Churches naturally provide powerful symbolic interpretations of contemporary Nigerian society that aid people in navigating a social world in which ambitions are expanding. For young Nigerians who are religiously inclined, and indeed for many others, who are not frequent church goers, but are influenced by increasingly dominant public discourses about the connections between individual religious morality and the prospects for prosperity, a Christian worldview can strongly influence their understanding of social problems, one of which is STIs. To a significant extent, Nigerians view STIs as a social problem which results from immorality, emblematic of a widely shared sense of the country's worst problems: poverty, inequality, corruption, crime, and now HIV/AIDS.

In Nigeria, the upsurge in HIV/AIDS has been alarming, despite several preventive communication campaigns designed to create awareness among the people about the adverse consequences of contracting the infections (Kadiri, Ahmad & Mustaffa, 2015). The reason for the upsurge of the epidemic might be the fact that sexual behaviour modifications remain the major focus of the campaigns. Early on, it was recognized that religion had a role to play in behavioural change, because religion can make a difference in the intimate behaviour of individuals (Kagimu, Marum, Wabwire-Mangen, Nakyanjo, Walakira & Hogle, 1998). Some other scholars argue that religion can shape people's perception and decision making on risky sexual behaviours that can lead to HIV/AIDS by contributing to an individual's concept of their own identity, values and beliefs (Koenig, 1998; Kadiri, Ahmad & Mustaffa, 2015).

An individual's religiosity describes his or her cognitive, affective and behavioural relationship to their respective religion. Higher religiosity involves stronger consistency between religious values and behaviour, but also a stronger resistance to changing existing values and behaviours. Increased levels of circumcision, reduced frequency of intoxication and high valuation of premarital abstinence and marital fidelity, are all examples of how religious values can result in lower risk behaviours (Biaya, 2001; Gray, 2004). Smith (2003)

asserted that religion represents one of the many potential normative orders, claiming youths' allegiance and adherence to sexual behaviour in most communities. Similarly, the acceptance and delivery of HIV/AIDS campaigns may be dependent on the prevailing religious culture, within a local community as well as at the national stage. Religious values and practices are often deeply entwined in the fabric of daily lives, and the leaders of churches, mosques, temples, and other religious communities play powerful roles in shaping attitudes, opinions and behaviours in many developing countries. These religious leaders not only provide spiritual guidance to their followers, but they are often the primary providers of a variety of local health and social services. Moreover, they are in close and regular contact with all age groups in society and their words are respected. In fact, in some traditional African communities, religious leaders are often more influential than local government officials, or secular community leaders (UNFPA, 2007).

However, despite the major influence religious leaders have in their society, their input in the development of HIV preventive communication campaigns has not been well studied. Most studies on STIs in Nigeria have focused on the knowledge, attitude, prevalence and sources of information on STIs: e.g. prevalence of STIs among attendees of AFRH centre in Ibadan (Okonko, Akinpelu, &Okerentugba, 2012); knowledge and practice of condom usage among undergraduate students in Edo State (Izekor*et al.* 2014); knowledge and treatment-seeking behaviour of University of Ilorin students (Kadiri, Ahmad, &Mustaffa, 2014); factors predicting attitude of first- year university students towards STIs, HIV in Ogun State, Nigeria (Adekeye, 2013); vulnerability and knowledge of STIs among female traders of reproductive age in Enugu, Nigeria (Ikeako*et al.* 2014); and knowledge, sources of information and risk factors for STIs among secondary school youths in Zaria, Northern Nigeria (Aliyu *et al.* 2013).

Consequently, this study was conducted to understand the perspectives of religious leaders particularly, the mountain prayer warriors, on how religion can be used to curb risky sexual behaviour that leads to HIV/AIDS. The study also strives to explain how

religiosity can be incorporated to produce an appropriate and effective communication campaign.

HIV/AIDS in Nigeria

As of December 2011, about 3,459,363 people are living with HIV/AIDS, with an estimated number of 1,449,166 requiring Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs (NACA, 2012). That same year, 388,864 new infections were recorded, while records show that 217,148 AIDS-related deaths occurred in the country (NACA, 2012). With an estimated population of 162,265,000, and as the most populated country in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigerian patients are obviously a big burden, not only to the West Africa region and the African continent, but to the world at large in terms of HIV/AIDS (NACA, 2012). The most recent Nigerian HIV figure of about 3.5 million people infected with HIV, placed Nigeria second on the list of countries with the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence in the world, below only South Africa (NACA, 2012). The given figures on the prevalence of HIV/ AIDS probably underestimate the true magnitude of the epidemic, because of underreporting, inadequate resources for HIV testing, and missed diagnoses in the country (Alubo, 2002). Undoubtedly, STIs are on the increase in Nigeria, particularly among the youths within the age range of 15-24 years (Shoveller *et al.*, 2004; Dixon-Mueller, 2009; Okereke, 2010; *Ahmed et al.* 2013). Other studies affirmed that the reason for the prevalence among this age group is because Nigerian youths are not only sexually active, but also indulge in risky sexual behaviour (Nwokoji & Ajuwon, 2004; Oyeyemi, Abdulkarim, & Oyeyemi, 2011; Imaledo, Peter-Kio, &Asuquo, 2013). In their study, Goldenberg, Shoveller, Ostryand Koehoorn (2008) noted that young people were the most vulnerable to STIs. The reasons given were that, apart from their uncontrollable sexual drive, they also have multiple sexual partners and rarely use contraception, making them more vulnerable to STIs than other segments of the population. As a result of this situation, it is pertinent to say that the Nigerian situation can impose grave health challenges, not just on the region, but also on the world at large. Therefore, it is important to explore a

more appropriate way through which STI preventive communication campaigns can be effectively used to reduce the current explosive and growing varieties of sexually transmitted infections.

Religions in Nigeria

Religion is a reality in human cultural experience. It has a pervasive influence on the existence of human beings. Religion determines the lives of many Nigerians from cradle to grave: what they eat and wear, the school they go to, the occupation they choose to engage in, and their choice of spouse are all aspects of their life nurtured by religion. Religion in Nigeria plays a major role in the life of the people. To some it is their candle light; it gives them insight, wisdom and knowledge. The faith is increased through the study of scripture, books and prayers. The main purpose of religion is to lead people to something good and peaceful. It also helps them to understand their own lives and to be kind to others.

Religion as an element of culture, describes the way man relates with the supernatural world or the Divine Being. Religion is one of the world's largest institutions and probably the only institution that bridges the gap of race, class, and nationality. Religion is an important phenomenon in contemporary Nigeria. Religious practice in Nigeria is just as varied and diverse as the population, creating a complex and fascinating situation that arises from its "triple heritage," of indigenous religious traditions, Islam, Christianity and traditional religion. According to a 2011 report by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, about 50.8% of Nigeria's population are Christians, 47.8% are Muslims and 1.4% adhere to other religions. The other religions are Hinduism, Bahai, Judaism, The Grail Message, and The Reformed Ogboni Fraternity, which are practised by either foreigners or negligible few Nigerians.

The various religions that exist help to accentuate regional and ethnic distinctions. All religions represented in Nigeria are practiced in every major city. However Islam dominates Northern Nigeria, Protestantism and local syncretic Christianity are most evident in South-Western Nigeria and Catholicism predominates in the Igbo

and closely related areas. From all indications, religion remains a potent tool of culture interfacing with HIV/AIDS preventive communication. Its potency lies in its ability to prevent adherent young people from involving in risky sexual behaviour. It can then lead to the reduction of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The injunctions from different Holy Books can be adapted to communicate encouraging messages to young people to lead a life that can prevent HIV/AIDS.

Methods

This study was carried out among mountain prayer warriors, who use the Sobi mountain in Ilorin, Kwara State, as a platform for special prayer area. These prayer warriors converge in this place to pray, especially for their parishioners and for burning issues. In this study, in-depth interviews were held among 15 prayer warriors. Six of them were females while the remaining were males. At the commencement of each in-depth interview, adequate information was provided to each informant on the details and rationale for the study. Each informant was given an opportunity to decline involvement in the study. Researchers wrote down the names of all informants who provided verbal informed consent prior to interview commencement. The in-depth interview was conducted in a local language, called Yoruba language, which was later transcribed to English by a potent transcribe. The in-depth interview centred on understanding the perception of mountain prayer warriors about STIs, the rationale for using the mountain for prayers, and how basic Christian tenets can be used to discourage people from involving in risky sexual behaviour that could lead to the prevalence of STIs. Finally, the study seeks to investigate their contributions as a religious group towards minimising the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country.

Findings

Analysis of the transcripts revealed five main themes which were identified simultaneously by two independent reviewers of the transcripts. The five themes were as follows: knowledge of STIs and relevance of the Prayer Mountain; religious leaders' attitudes; challenges in disseminating sex education information in church; usage of biblical quotations and involvement of other stakeholders.

Knowledge of STIs and Relevance of the Prayer Mountain

All the informants of this research understand what STIs are, particularly HIV/AIDS. The majority of them also has a good understanding of the implications and consequences of getting infected. The informants were forthcoming on the relevance of using the mountain top as a point of contact with God. They explained that the mountain top is seen as a platform to get closer to God, with the view of getting miracles for divine healing. They enunciated that the inspiration for using the mountain as a prayer zone is the feat that Moses achieved on the mountain, by staying in the presence of God for 40 days and night. They stated that Moses's action is one of the reasons why people prefer to use the mountain for divine prayers, because it is believed to be a means of getting closer to God. To them, being closer to God ensures that prayers are quickly answered.

Some informants agreed that they devote their entire life towards serving God, which makes people to hold them in high esteem. Another informant explained that people come to the mountain top to get healing for different kinds of diseases, however, few people come for healing from STIs. A female prayer warrior revealed that the reason why people (old and young) wouldn't come to their parish for healing on STIs, is because the infection is viewed as a consequence of a reckless life-style. Another informant explained that those types of people would rather go to the hospital or traditional healers for cure than come to church to seek divine healing. 'Majority of people do not come for STIs healing, because

they are scared of being reprimanded. The church mostly preach against risky sexual behaviour that leads to STIs'

Yet another informant reiterated that: 'people don't go to *Ori-Oke* for STIs healing, based on the experience of others, who were discovered to be STIs positive, and were later disgraced on the pulpit by the pastor on duty.'

The above statements show that some men of God stigmatise their parish members, which explains the reason for low influx of people that go there for divine healing.

One of the female prayer warriors explained that her consultation is free of charge; however, any members of the church can show gratification to the prayer warriors through gifts and sometimes cash. She said that the money is just meant to appreciate the efforts of the men of God. It is interesting to note that another informant explained that payment for spiritual consultation is dependent on the prayer warrior involved.

Another interesting discovery of this research was that, despite an avalanche of evidence in favour of sex education, some religious leaders still oppose it and are firmly against the use of condoms. Some informants condemned the use of condoms, as it is seen as condoning illicit sexual relations.

Religious Leaders' Attitude

The result of the study shows that the mountain prayer warriors perceive HIV/AIDS as a disease that could be prevented, if individuals do not engage in risky sexual behaviour. Some religious leaders had varied responses to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), but they agreed that they have responsibilities towards the prevention of HIV/AIDS and that sex education contributes to healthy behaviours, and consequently to the prevention of HIV transmission.

On the issue of preaching against risky sexual behaviour, a male informant explained that religious organisations are trying their best to discourage young people from engaging in the social vices, while another informant opined that it is better for religious organizations

to preach against the risks involved in risky sexual behaviour, instead of preaching high condemnation of illicit sex. This informant further explained that the bitter fact is that young people are deeply involved in risky sexual behaviour, so much so that even the church cannot pretend not to know. Therefore, it is better for the church to look for a creative religious angle of passing on the message about the consequences of risky sexual behaviour, instead of out-right condemning the act. An informant stated:

> Religious leaders have a high potential of contributing to HIV/AIDS prevention among the congregation, in particular, and the entire public in general. At one point, I personally implored my parishioners to adhere to a simple Christian life. (Informant A3)

Another informant explained that:

> Religious leaders like us have a herculean task to mentor young people to adopt a healthy life, which will make them to be free from negative consequences. There are youths programs that are organised that centre on risky sexual behaviours and their consequences. Some of the parishioners accept this doctrines and change for a better life (Informant A7)

Another stated:

> As a religious leader, I always preached and discouraged risky sexual behaviour. The only thing that is being discussed in sexuality issues is abstinence…However; it still boils down to the personal conviction of every individual. Some may ignore it while it may have positive effect on others (Informant 1)

The above comments show that religious leaders can be an instrumental stimulus for conditioning the young and old to refrain from casual sex. However, in some cases, the moral precepts preached by religion may not be impactful enough due to cognitive traits of every individual.

However, there is another twist to the preaching of sex in church. Some informants concurred that discussing human sexuality in religious contexts was the greatest barrier to engaging faith communities in HIV prevention efforts. Several respondents reflected:

> Talking about sexuality in church is a very tricky and sensitive issue. It sounds so out of place for me...Sometimes, it makes me feel like I am encouraging them to taste the forbidden fruit. The truth is that most of our preaching doesn't really address AIDS because you're not supposed to have sex (informant 5)

Another informant explained

> Of course we know that people would eventually have sex at a point, but the snag is that we just haven't found ways to address it, or it just hasn't been discussed. Even if we are going to discuss it, it would be men discussion. But they're not coming up with a solution to get everybody involved and bring it to the forefront of any discussion. The truth of the matter is that it is difficult to talk about HIV in the church because we have defined what we will accept as the proper language, the proper subject, and the proper issues to talk about. Sex and HIV are subjects that make many uncomfortable

Another dimension to the discussion of sex in the church was given by another informant. They explained that some men of God have been found wanting on issues of morality. A female mountain prayer warrior explains that: '…not all religious leaders have control or influence on their congregation. Some of them cannot even preach about risky sexual behaviour, since they are not righteous either.' Another informant stated that, 'Some religious leaders are found wanting in character and integrity. They use religion as a means of gaining cheap access to gullible youngsters, who have so much trust in them.'

Challenges of disseminating sex education information in church

The prayer warriors cited challenges experienced with balancing theological messages with candid conversations about human sexuality and reproductive health. They explained that it is indeed a tight rope to walk, when discussing sexuality. One of the informants explained that at a time that he was discussing sex with young people, he could feel the tension in the atmosphere, which shows that the congregation found it appalling.

Another informant commented that discussing condoms and sexual education amongst the congregation conflicts with the church commitments to promoting abstinence until marriage. Another informant explained: 'The church has taken a position about promoting abstinence for so long that we don't want to mention condoms because people may think we're saying 'you should be having promiscuous sex.'

Another major challenge is the silence that is attached to sexual issues. Numerous informants explained that a major barrier to addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic was a tacit 'code of silence' about HIV/AIDS in the church. A mountain prayer warrior elaborated on the cultural roots of silence about HIV/AIDS:

> The African community has a cultural disposition not to talk about things that are painful and difficult. We don't talk about people who are drug users in our families or infidelity in marital relationships. We don't talk about sexuality period. We try to be happier. We've got enough economic and political stress to cope with already. Let's talk about nice things. What's driving this epidemic is our inability to talk about difficult topics, much less about HIV/AIDS.

Another informant commented that the church community has not embraced HIV/AIDS as an important domestic social priority. Yet another informant identified several resources challenges associated with addressing HIV/AIDS in church contexts. First, there was a common perception that discussing HIV/AIDS from the

pulpit could have detrimental financial implications for faith institutions. One Pastor explained that discussing controversial topics, such as sexuality and HIV/AIDS might affect church growth and tithing. 'If we talk about HIV, congregants may say "this is not the reason why I came to church." Therefore, the economic implications of preaching about sexual issues is real, and this can affect tithes and offerings in the church.'

Usage of Biblical Quotations

It is incontrovertible that religions, through their doctrines, exert strong influence on the lives of young people. The majority of the informants explained that the inclusion of biblical quotation in STIs communication would get the attention of majority of people who are religiously conscious. One informant stated that 'if we use religion, we would get the attention of 70% of the target audience on STIs. Young religious conscious individuals are easily influenced by information from the Bible.' Another informant explained that adultery and fornication can be proscribed if sensitive religious quotations are used in STIs campaigns. He gave few examples of sensitive biblical quotations such as: '…whoso committeth adultery with a woman laketh understanding: he that doeth it detroyeth his own soul' (Proverb 6: 32). And Corinthians 6: 18 exhorted 'Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.' Other informants explained that if the Bible is adapted in STIs campaigns, the campaign planners must ensure that it is sensitive to the language, lifestyle and culture of the people in a particular community.

Involvement of other stakeholders

More recently, emphasis has been on participatory communication in health communication, where stakeholders are involved in the communication related to prevention and care by ensuring that their target audience has access to clear and accurate information to guide informed decisions.

The above assertion was reiterated by the majority of the informants who expressed that HIV is not just a health problem, but

also has social, political, legal and economic implications. Consequently, they agreed that while it is important for religious leaders to be involved, it is more important to involve, coordinate and mobilize a range of stakeholders in order to confront the epidemic, both because they are affected and because they can play various roles. The majority of the religious leaders explained that stakeholders should strive to make serious efforts to build and maintain both formal and informal relationships, within and between governments, communities, business and civil society. These informants explained that the stakeholder would be able to increase knowledge of HIV/AIDS, alert community members to the need for behavioural change, and to improve the lives of PLWHA and people affected by HIV/AIDS. They state:

Stakeholders are the building blocks towards the achievement of an effective STIs campaigns in various community. The stakeholder should comprise all Government Ministries, statutory bodies, state corporations, local authorities and uniformed services at national, provincial and district levels, internally and externally, mainstreaming HIV and AIDS into core functions.

Another informant stated that:

> The synergetic relationship between religious bodies and other stakeholders would have a huge impact on the behavioural change towards STIs. Religious leaders and media practitioners cannot do it alone. There is a need to place all hands on deck towards achieving an effective campaign exercise on STIs.

Discussion

As the data reveals, the mountain prayer warriors have a good understanding of STIs, particularly HIV/AIDS. They all understood that HIV/AIDS is an infection which could be contracted through unprotected sexual intercourse. They believe that STIs are infections that can never be contracted individuals that live a healthy, moral life. This shows that the Christian perspective of the infection highlights

the dangers of an immoral view of the disease. But this study suggests that public health programmes not ignore the strength of these religious interpretations when trying to address the epidemic in Nigeria.

This study showed that the mountain top is a sacred place for special connection to God. Therefore, people accord high respect to men of God who worship there, because they are seen as individuals with a special relationship to God. As a result of this, some committed parishioners go to the mountain tops for divine intervention for afflictions that affect them. It is interesting to note that these parishioners don't go there for divine intervention on sexually related infections because they could be stigmatized. One of the informants stated that STIs are seen as infections that affect people who are sexually loose, and as a result of this, it makes people shun divine healing.

The data in this study revealed that, despite the great task shouldered by the mountain prayer warriors, the majority of them do it without expecting any financial gratifications. However, any parishioner that wants to appreciate the warrior can gratify them in any amount they so wish.

This study shows that some mountain prayer warriors see religion as having the capacity to protect young people from engaging in sexually risk behaviour. Therefore, they think that religious personnel should play a critical role in addressing HIV/AIDS within their communities and in encouraging community members to undergo HIV test, in particular.

One of the highpoints in the discoveries of this study was that some of the informants explained that some prayer warriors are found wanting on sexual related issues. Therefore, using religious people to preach against risky sexual behaviour that leads to STIs might not be successful in all its ramifications. However, the biggest challenges that the prayer warriors identified in addressing STIs, particularly, HIV/AIDS in their communities were related to addressing human sexuality in faith-based contexts. Many participants commented that HIV/AIDS is still considered a 'sacred topic' in many social circles, explaining that fear of being perceived

as encouraging casual and indiscriminate sex within the parishioners inhibited prayer warriors from discussing the HIV/AIDS epidemic more openly. This finding corroborates findings made in other research works (Woodyard, Peterson, Stokes, 2000; Valera &Taylor, 2011; Ward, 2005).

Many prayer warriors agreed that addressing human sexuality in faith contexts is still often considered taboo, and several felt that discussing AIDS, human sexuality, risk behaviours, or condom use might be perceived as controversial in their places of worship. The mountain warriors recommended that discussions related to behaviours inhibit the response of faith institutions' to the epidemic; some suggested embracing discussions related to human sexuality, while others suggested devoting greater efforts on less divisive prevention messages, like social justice, human rights, and HIV testing.

Scarce resources were another important barrier to addressing the epidemic. Several pastors candidly explained their fears that discussing HIV/AIDS at church might have detrimental impacts on church attendance and tithing. This highlights the fact that economic considerations impact the prayer warriors' decisions about addressing the epidemic: discussing AIDS has serious economic implications for some faith leaders. Many participants also commented that creating programs to address HIV/AIDS required staff and financial resources that their institutions did not have. Understanding these economic realities has important implications on planning HIV/AIDS prevention programs for faith institutions. Many pastors recommended allocating greater public resources for HIV/AIDS prevention to faith institutions, particularly related to HIV testing and education.

The biggest challenges that the prayer warriors identified for addressing HIV/AIDS in their communities were related to addressing human sexuality in faith-based contexts. Several young pastors commented that they did not feel encouraged to discuss HIV/AIDS' issues in the church, fearing that they might alienate parishioners, who preferred not to discuss issues related to human sexuality. However, the data of this study exposed that controversial

topics, such as HIV/AIDS could be easily discussed by prayer warriors that are well established with many followers. This shows that more experienced pastors can be used to jumpstart public dialogue about HIV/AIDS, thereby leading to normalisation of discussions about HIV/AIDS within the faith community.

While faith leaders identified several important barriers to HIV/AIDS prevention, they strongly believed that churches and mosques could, and should, play a critical role in addressing HIV/AIDS within their communities, as well as encouraging HIV/AIDS testing among their parishioners.

Most of the informants explained that the usage of biblical quotations would have a tremendous impact on a large percentage of the target audience. This assertion is based on the belief that Nigeria is a religious country, and most people strive, as much as possible, not to do anything that would go contrary to the will of God. Therefore, in order not to incur the wrath of God, people need to be reminded what to do to live a Godly life.

The informants also mentioned the importance of collaboration with stakeholders towards ensuring effectiveness of HIV/AIDS campaigns. The data from the study showed that stakeholders need to forge a formidable collaborative effort to face the epidemic head-on.

Recommendations

The time has come for HIV/AIDS preventive communication campaigns in Nigeria to adopt some Christian religious doctrines in their conceptualisation and implementation. Anything contrary to that may lead to campaign failure. As a result of this, subtle approaches can be used to incorporating Christian doctrines into HIV/AIDS campaigns, so that it will not infuriate some religious groups in the country. Evaluating the consequences of public health campaigns that promote abstinence as a means of protection will prove extremely complex. Promoting abstinence in a population where the majority of young people are or have been sexually active risks irrelevance. Even worse, if one assumes that young people will

be sexually active, abstinence only promotion risks making the negotiation of condom use more difficult by further stigmatizing premarital sexual relations. The idea that promoting abstinence (and fidelity) as pure may be wrong for a significant proportion of people who are already sexually active.

The findings also illuminated our understanding that religion alone cannot dissuade young people from becoming involved in risky sexual behaviour that leads to STIs. Some informants explained that the collaboration with important stakeholders is necessary for ensuring that effective information is disseminated in HIV/AIDS campaigns and that using community leaders for HIV/AIDS prevention can help mitigate the heavy stigma often associated with HIV/AIDS. Therefore, a culturally tailored HIV/AIDS prevention intervention should engage community leaders and members, build upon community strengths and capitalize on cultural pride. Understanding religious leaders' perceived barriers and proactive recommendations for effectively engaging religious institutions in HIV/AIDS prevention is critical for developing structural and community-based HIV/AIDS prevention interventions. The positive, proactive and concrete recommendations presented in this study provide a roadmap that can inform public policy in Kwara State, in particular, and in Nigeria in general.

Religious leaders, therefore, have a crucial role to play, by using the trust and authority they have in their communities to help bring about healing and hope to all who are effected by the epidemic. Religious leaders must endeavour to move beyond the negative views of sex and sexuality embedded in much of the various religious beliefs and towards embracing sex and sexuality as a gift from God. Religious leaders working zealously with committed governments, NGOs, media and well-meaning individuals in African countries, including Nigeria, can halt the spread of this pandemic.

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Chapter 8

Redefining *Ori-Oke* (Mountain Top) and the Emerging Economic Dynamics amongst Nigerian Pentecostal Churches

Babatunde Adedibu

Abstract

Ori-Oke within African Christianity lexicon is synonymous with a sacred space on a mountain top used for various prayer regimes, exorcism, rituals and religious practices, aimed at eliciting the assistance of the divine to ameliorate the existential challenges of a devotee. The proliferation of these sacred sites, especially among the African Indigenous Churches since the 1940's, has gradually made some of these Ori-Oke pilgrim centres, giving them unique religious value, quite distinct from the aesthetic value of the mountain tops. However, there seems to be a gradual shift and redefinition of the concept of Ori-Oke amongst Nigerian Pentecostal Churches, through the creation of campgrounds. The creation and acquisition of arable and industrial land by religious organizations, mainly Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, entails a lot of creativity, innovation and blurring of the distinctiveness between African Independent Churches in Nigeria and Pentecostal Churches. However, there exist commonalities in the economic dynamics on a mountain top and many campgrounds established by Pentecostal churches. This paper aims to utilize a sociological approach embedded in ethnographical methodology to highlight the redefinition of Ori-Oke, a variation of the African Indigenous Churches, in the light of the proliferation of Christian campgrounds by Pentecostal churches, particularly along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway in the South West of Nigeria.

Introduction

The emergence and proliferation of African Indigenous Churches, or the Aladura Churches (Praying Churches) heralded a new phase in the history of Christianity in Africa. The generic label associated with these churches was popularized by the pioneering work of John Peel

and Harold Turner (1968). Likewise, the mushrooming and proliferation of this movement were noted by other anthropologists and sociologists like Edward Geoffrey Parrinder (1953) and Robert Mitchell (1970). However, previous scholarships on the study of the emergence of these churches in Africa, have identified three broad groupings, which first include the Nativist, or the Ethiopian Churches, a splinter group based on Mission churches disinterested in the realization of the Venetian dream of a National Church; secondly, the Aladura Churches; and thirdly, the neo-Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. The high degree of contextualization of religious practices within the African Traditional worldview redefined Christianity, hitherto perceived by most Africans as a European phenomenon. The decolonisation of Christianity through the African Independent Churches (AICs) in the 19th century was a by-product of mission Christianity. Peel and Turner (2002: 3) wrote that: Although it is a different sort of Christianity than the one planted by Western missionaries; it was by all standards an outgrowth of mission Christianity. Peel and Turner (2002: 3) wrote that although it is a different sort of Christianity than the one planted by Western missionaries; it was by all standards an outgrowth of mission Christianity. The African Independent Churches were Africans' way of domesticating the Christian teachings.

The emerging brand of African Christianity was indeed a complete departure from the humming of hymns written and sung in English by African members of the mission churches. The sea of change in the indigenization of religious experiences and the contextualization of various local significations within the African worldview made these churches a haven of comfort and attraction to Africans. Their religious prescriptions were novel and fit into African culture to deal with devotees various existential challenges, which had little or no meaning within the purview of European Christianity.

The taxonomy of African Independent Churches by previous scholarship has identified four broad groupings, notably: the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement (C &S); the Church of the Lord (*Aladura*) and the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC). These four denominations are noted for

pneumacentrism, prayers, healings, miracles and emphasis on dualism in the spiritual warfare between the forces of evil and good. The dualistic notion perfectly fits into the African traditional worldview. Interestingly, the churches above were pioneered in the South-West Zone of Nigeria. The emphasis of these churches on prayer was pivotal to their being labeled as *Aladura* churches. The spirituality of *Aladura* churches is predicated on the absolute belief in God and the infusion of traditional African worldview sensibilities in religious rites and worship. This has fostered the enactment of distinctive spiritual disciplines of the *Aladura* in addressing contextual challenges about their cosmos, which the Mission churches never appropriated (Ayegboyin 1999: 45). These have aided the development of a set of spiritual disciplines that have assisted the *Aladura* in pursuing their relationship to the cosmos. To be sure, *Aladura* spirituality employs tenants of Christian tradition introduced by the formal agents of Christianity, but they are synthesized with traditional religious culture to develop a life based on the precepts of the Lord Jesus.

Re-Sacralisation of Space – The Mountain Top Phenomenon

One of the major contributions of the AIC to Christianity in Nigeria is the *Ori-Oke* (Mountain top) phenomenon. *Ori-Oke* within the *Aladura* nomenclature is the re-sacralisation of space on the mountain top, where people seek the supernatural power to ameliorate their existential challenges. The concept of 'sacred' has been the focus of contemporary scholarship, though Lynch opines that the term 'is still widely used today without clear theoretical underpinnings. Indeed, in much academic and popular usage, the "sacred" is often treated as a mere synonym for religion (Gordon, 2012: 9).' The implication of Lynch's perspective highlights the multiplicities of the term's usage and contextual interpretations; however, in this study, the emphasis is on the religious dimension. Furthermore, Lynch identified two broad classifications of sacredness based on perceived functionalities as 'ontological and cultural sociological.' Given this fact, the focus of this work is

ontological. A further perspective of sacredness gives insight to the importance and idiosyncrasies of religious practitioners, including those involved in visits to *Ori-Oke*. Morris posits that sacredness is 'a priori category, a feeling of awe and mystery, an experience of something "wholly other."' Thus, the subjective experience of the supernatural is a unique phenomenon experienced by religious adherents at different *Ori-Oke* and cannot be rationalized. It might suffice to note that many supplicants that visit these mountain tops travel from diverse locations across Nigeria, and at times outside Nigeria.

Morris, quoting French scholar, Emile Durkheim, concurs that 'sacred' is synonymous with religion or religious community, and is 'a unified set of beliefs and practices about sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden — beliefs and practices, which unite one single moral community' (Gordon, 2012: 115). Durkheim's theory inevitably sheds light on the various norms and religious restrictions prevalent on different *Ori-Oke*. A typical example is the *Ori-Oke Akinkemi,* which is restrictive by not allowing female religious adherents to pray on the *Ori-Oke*. The apparent restrictive modalities in sacred spaces are clearly indicated at the entrance of the mountain. Likewise, there are moral and religious codes that visitors are expected to comply with during the time spent on the mountain top. I thus posit that the concept of the sacredness of the *Ori-Oke* is socially constructed, a by-product of the lived experiences of people who have supernatural encounters that are seemingly transformational and ameliorate or eliminate existing challenges. It does imply that the presence of the supernatural on these mountains is not intrinsic but is attributed to the *Ori-Oke*. Cave, quoting Eliade, argues that 'the place *Ori-Oke* is never chosen by man; it is merely discovered by him. In other words, the sacred place, in some way, or another, reveals itself to him.' However, the binary notions of profane and sacred nations that evolved within AICs nomenclature constitute a significant dissonance within mission discourses and are considered to be antithetical to the holy nature of God (Gibbs, 2001: 226). Nevertheless, the sacred site or *Ori-Oke*, as it were, is a social construct in the nomenclature of the AICs, which is mutually

exclusive. Moreover, the uniqueness of the sacred space that captures the phenomenon of *Ori-Oke* within the worldview of AICs resonates broadly within the concept of sacralization of space ontologically. Cave summarized the importance of Eliade population noting that:

> In Eliade's conception, there are several components that make a place a 'sacred' place: 1) the place has a quality or experience felt and interpreted to be distinctive and irreducible; 2) the experience is inherent to the place; 3) the experience, therefore, is not subject to human choice; 4) the place and what is done there (the rituals, for instance), are modeled on mythic patterns (on what the gods or culture heroes did in the beginning); and 5) the place is capable of transforming one. [… In sum,] sacred space is that space (or place) that commands excessive, discriminating attention that orients and transforms a person, or group, such that their life, or a component of it, is perceived to be meaningful.

Eliade's assertion above, as chronicled by Cave, highlights the inherent process through which norms evolved in sacred spaces, including *Ori-Oke*. At *Ori-Oke* norms evolved based on the lived experiences of religious adherents and the modalities for sustenance of their clientele with claims of transformation, based on the adherence to various religious codes prescribed by the ecclesial structure managing the *Ori-Oke*. Elaide's observation is pivotal in religious studies in unravelling the value of the construction of sacred spaces by religious adherents.

Apart from pneuma centrism of the *Aladura*, the churches are also known for their strong emphasis on prayers, the creation of sacred spaces on mountain tops, *Ori-Oke,* and stringent rules and ethical codes to members of their churches, as well as the people who visit the sacred sites. Prayer Mountain phenomenon was initiated and proliferated by first generation indigenous churches across Nigeria. A cursory observation of some of these mountains within the South-West axis of Nigeria reveals various characterisation and significations in the names of these mountains. The names of these Prayer Mountains are indicative of the perceived uniqueness of the

Ori-Oke and the natural value systems created by the clergy to sustain the continued patronage of clientele that visit the mountain-top for an encounter with the divine. Some of the famous Prayer Mountain-tops in the South West States of Nigeria include *Ori-Oke* Also (Breakthrough) located at Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State; *Ori-Oke* Ikoyi, Osun State; *Ori-Oke Agbara Aseyori* (Power to succeed), Osun State; *Akoko Mi* (My Season), Osun State; *Baba Shiloh* Prayer Mountain, Ibadan-Ife Expressway, Oyo State; *Ori Oke Irapada Oluwa* (Mountain top of God's Redemption), Ibadan-Ife Expressway, Oyo State; *Ori Oke Atunse* (Mountain top of Restoration), Ibadan-Ife Expressway, Egbeda, Oyo State; Rehoboth Prayer Mountain (The Lord has made room Mountain top), Ajegunle, Ogun State; Ancient of Days Prayer Mountain *Arugbo Ojo*, Abeokuta, Ogun State and Erimo Prayer Mountain in Ekiti State, to mention a few.

These Prayer Mountain sites are transactional sites, characterised by devotees' inherent belief in the presence of the divine and succour to the distressed and confused. But each Prayer Mountain is peculiar in terms of its name and the religious instructions about the sacredness of the mountain. For instance, *Ori Oke Abiye*, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria, was founded by Prophet Samson Akande in 1944, but according to the CAC's history of mountain, the exact 'location of this mountain did not come easy. In the process of searching for the God ordained spot, many sites were reached by the founder, but none of them received divine approval until the present location'.

Moreover, it is pertinent to observe that the issue of spatiality is imperative in the *Ori-Oke* phenomenon in its initial conceptualisation by the founding fathers of AICs. However, due to the subjective nature of supernatural events, interrogating the motivation for the sacralization of hills and mountain tops might be misinterpreted or misconceived. Nevertheless, Ositelu states that the use of mountaintop by AICs is because 'these are features of African traditional religion: the belief that the abode of Olodumare is in the high places' (Oshitelu, 2007: 107). The import of this motivation is that there has been a high level of adoption of the ritual and religious ethos of AICs, reflective of the traditional worldview of the area of its emergence. It is interesting that the use of mountain top by the

AICs is prevalent in Nigeria/Africa and not outside the country. However, AIC members might disagree with Ositelu's assertion, because they argue that *Ori-Oke* has its origin in the founder of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ. Some of the scriptures that attest to this inference in the New Testament state that Jesus went to the mountain to pray on several occasions. Matthew 14: 23 asserts that 'And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening came, he was there alone.' We also read in Luke 6: 12, 'And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.'

A significant observation is that the proliferation of *Ori-Oke* has led to the development of the hinterlands, where these mountain tops are situated. Various small scale jobs have emerged to enhance the economic life of the residents of these villages, such as the transportation business, food and book sales, as well as retail outlets for religious commodities like anointing oil and 'pure' water sachets, usually at the base of the *Ori-Oke*. It should be noted that it is not only the religious adherents that visit the *Ori-Oke* and the rural communities where *Ori-Oke* are situated. Thus I argue that it is not only the religious adherents that visit the Ori Oke's that experience the supernatural with claims of transformation but also the some of the rural communities where these Ori Oke's are situated are economically and socially transformed. Some of these communities are redefined by the provision of essential facilities, such as generators, public address systems, modern conveniences, technological services, like Point of Sales (POS) terminals for collection of offerings and tithe, as well as multi-media services for the recording and sale of teachings and prayer points of 'anointed men of God.' It suffices to note that there is an interaction of socio-economic, religious and educational services at some of the *Ori-Oke,* as it is not just the cries of supplications that go on at the mountain tops, but also daily marketing and economic transactions. Therefore, the initial *Ori-Oke* conceptualisation might gradually be changing in the contemporary society. What dominates the landscape is the positive adjustment of these sacred sites to modernity. Nevertheless,

the response to modernity is now influencing the *Ori-Oke* phenomenon via the interface of modern and local forces in host communities.

The retention of the peculiar religious idiosyncrasies of AIC and spiritualities, such as belief in God, prayer, prophecies, healing and a host of other cardinal features, are still a major source of attraction for many *Ori-Oke* seekers, whilst the modernisation provides succor to city dwellers who hold the hope that the sacred sites will herald an intimate encounter with divine power to assuage their challenges. *Ori-Oke* in the initial conceptualisation must have provided a serene space, devoid of the hustle-bustle life of the city.

There is now the use of social media to advertise the programmes of some *Ori-Oke*, as in the case of *Ori-Oke Abiye*, Ede, now led by Prophet Timothy Funso Akande, the son of the founder, Late Prophet Samson Akande. Prophet Timothy Funso Akande holds a Bachelor's Degree in Language and Communication Arts from the University of Ibadan and he was a former employee of Agip Nigeria, PLC. It might suffice to note that some of the rebranding and positive responses constitute major renewal within AIC caused by the well-educated second generation leadership of some of these *Ori-Oke*. This is a big difference from the era of Apostle Ayo Babalola, when the emphasis was more on charismatic gifts and healing ministry.

However, the changing face of AIC's leadership regarding educational attainment is a break-away from the stereotyping tradition of being led by only prophets who are illiterates or semi-illiterates. Dr. Rufus Okikiola Oshitelu, the Primate of the Church of the Lord (Aladura) worldwide, holds a doctorate in Computer Science at the Department of Engineering of Western Kennedy University, Agoura Hills California. He also had his Ph.D. in Religion from Covington Theological Seminary, Roseville, United States. Dr. Rufus Okikiola Ositelu is the son of the founder, late Prophet General Josiah Olunowo Ositelu in 1925 and inaugurated in 1930 in Ogere Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. The second generation leadership of some of the AICs are ecumenically astute and have repositioned their churches within various ecumenical organizations within

Nigeria, Africa, and the globe. Consequentially, the Church of the Lord (Aladura) is one of the several AICs that are active members of the World Council of Churches.

Despite the plausible development that the *Ori-Oke* facilitate in host communities, the use of generators to enable the use of media technologies constitutes a great health hazard to the communities, because of toxic carbon monoxide emission from the generators, used because of the non-availability of electricity, or epileptic power supply to host communities. Consequentially, some of the health challenges in the city are being replicated on a small scale, because of generator pollution (Ayantayo, 2009: 116-130). Associated with the problem of chemical pollution, which can lead to respiratory diseases, is also noise pollution emanating from the use of megaphones or loudspeakers used by the leaders of the *Ori-Oke*. The pristine nature of *Ori-Oke,* though sacralised, raises issues of stewardship and ethics in the global call for a reduction in carbon emission both in the developed and developing economies.

The Emergence and Proliferation of Christian Campgrounds/Mountain (*Ori-Oke*) in South West Nigeria and the 'Pristine' conceptualization of *Ori-Oke*

In the light of the internal renewal of AICs, there is a multiplier effect on the *Ori-Oke* phenomenon; it is imperative to examine the redefinition of the *Ori-Oke* phenomenon by some neo-Nigerian Pentecostal churches which seemingly are a beehive of social religious and educational activities. In this section, the development, as well as the nexus between elements of asceticism of *Ori-Oke* will be compared to the prevalence of neo-Pentecostal camps across Nigeria, established by major Pentecostal churches in the country.

Nigeria is a country of over 150 million people, according to the 2006 National Population Census. It is a state that is culturally diverse, multi-ethnic and religiously pluralistic. Various scholars have chronicled the emergence, growth, rituals and excesses of Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria (Adeboye, 2012). Harold Turner referred to AICs as the earliest form of Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria, but

several historiographical studies have identified a multiplicity of events that led to the emergence of the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria (Ayuk, 2002). Some of these factors include general decline in moral rectitude, poor leadership and perceived inadequacies of the over contextualization of AICs.

Adeboye Olufunke's taxonomy on the emergence of Nigerian Pentecostalism identified three phases. She noted that the first phase of the development of Nigerian Pentecostalism was started in 1930 and was firmly rooted by the 1960s. This era marked the genesis of ecumenical initiatives with AICs and the different Pentecostal denominations across the Atlantic. The second phase 'was between the 1970s and the 1980s which witnessed the activities of interdenominational campus fellowships, amplification of the holiness message and the emphasis on biblical inerrancy' (Adeboye, 2005). The third phase of Pentecostal development in Nigeria 'dated back to the early 1990s. This period was classified as neo-Pentecostalism'. Despite the attempt to delineate the time and the emergence of Nigeria Pentecostal churches, a major fault line is that the categorisation is very fluid, due to changes and renewal of this religious movement. For instance, the Redeemed Christian Church, which emerged in 1952, based on Adeboye's taxonomy, should be classified in the first phase. The major hallmarks of neo-Pentecostalism resonate within RCCG parishes, as a result of internal restructuring and creativity. These, as observed in the RCCG include the appropriation of public spaces such as cinema, stadium, halls and shopping centres, which are resacralized. However, this constitutes a variation of the normative church architecture within mission churches and the blurring of the sacred and secular through the appropriation of public spaces, depicting the missionary nature of God. Apart from the shift of emphasis from apocalyptic notions by most neo-Pentecostal denominations in Nigeria to 'world accommodating' dispositions, noticeable changes regarding social and political engagements have reclassified these churches as 'Progressive Pentecostals' (Miller, 2007: 5).

One of the major features of the changes in the neo-Pentecostal landscape in South-West Nigeria is the resacralization of arable farm

lands and forests, purchased from land owners and communities, later sacralised and utilized for rituals and religious practices. The Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, which is 146 km long, is the first of such places in Nigeria, which have been redefined by neo-Pentecostal churches such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Deeper Life Bible Church, Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, Four Square Gospel Church, Cherubim and Seraphim Church, and Celestial Church of God. All have acquired several hectares of land for their rituals and religious practices along the expressway. The sacralization of arable farm lands by neo-Pentecostal churches such as the Deeper life, RCCG and other neo-Pentecostal churches is a significant redefinition and repackaging of AIC's *Ori-Oke* phenomenon.

There are various commonalities within the establishment of campgrounds by neo-Pentecostal churches and *Ori-Oke* by AICs. Nevertheless, the attractive model of the serene locations of *Ori-Oke* in villages and city outskirts, devoid of the working economic, social and active population, is similar to the spatial site of camps of neo-Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. The Lagos–Ibadan Expressway might be referred to as the 'Pentecostal Expressway' due to the proliferation of Christian camps. The 127.6-kilometre Lagos-Ibadan (79.3 miles) highway, which is the oldest in Nigeria was commissioned in 1978. Many of the villages along the motorway in 1978, were sparsely populated, close to nature and thick forest inhabited by wild animals, without electricity and without water supply. The acquisition of these farm lands for sacred use often was based on divine instructions. Thus, the inherent sacredness of the camp sites was not essential to the case of the *Ori-Oke*, but it was the lived experiences of the leadership of neo-Pentecostal churches as well as their adherents. The proliferation of campgrounds across various villages has enhanced development within neighboring communities, causing the social and economic transformation of villages. These villages have become major commercial hubs in the development of housing, comparable to the main cities in Nigeria.

Nevertheless, there are ethical questions on land acquisition, as arable farm lands are no longer available, and with the increasing

challenges of noise pollution and crime rates in the neighboring communities, such as Mowe, Loburo and Shimawa which are the adjourning villages to the RCCG Camp Ground. It might be argued that the level of socio-economic activities in most campgrounds cannot be compared with the disadvantages of the *Ori-Oke*, but the renewal of the *Ori-Oke* might, interestingly, be positive, because of employment generated for their adherents, in order to avoid losing their members to contemporary evils emblazoned by the neo-pentecostal churches. It is important to note that the citing of RCCG Redemption Camp as an example of a campground might not be appropriate, as it is better to describe Redemption Camp as a city rather than a campground. From the experiential perspective as a Pentecostal minister and missionologist, I have observed that some campgrounds, like the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries and Redemption Camp have succeeded to a large extent in transformation agenda through various Routinization of Charisma of Pastor E.A Adeboye, the General Overseer of the RCCG and Pastor Daniel Kolawole Olukoya, the General Overseer of Mountain of Fire Ministries.

Religious creativity and innovations are significant commonalities between AICs' *Ori-Oke* and most neo-Pentecostal programmes held on campgrounds.

In response to social change, various Christian denominations are increasingly becoming creative to meet the existential challenges of their adherents. Through various structured programmes and the invitation of notable ministers within these two traditions, many of the *Ori-Oke* have special monthly plans to address various challenges of their adherents; the religious creativity inevitably attracts diverse religious 'shoppers' to the sacred sites. The atmosphere during such programmes at the *Ori-Oke* and the campgrounds of neo-Pentecostal churches is emblematic valorisation, which the holy site undergoes, as a place that God had predestined for the church or *Ori-Oke* from time immemorial. Consequentially, God's presence is believed to be felt in a unique manner in the sacred sites. The Camp *Ori-Oke*

represents an emotionally charged environment for the members of AICs or neo-Pentecostal denominations.

However, the overt restrictions associated with sacred spots among AICs, as a by-product of their doctrinal and religious subscription, is blurred in most neo-Pentecostal campgrounds. In the Redemption Camp, due to the nefarious activities of some religious shoppers, the use of the auditorium for prayers is restricted to certain periods during the programmes of the church. Indeed, these sacred spaces are social constructed, but nevertheless, this has not deterred the activities of petty thieves and armed robbers when people leave their valuables beneath the mountain base, guest houses in the Camp, or in their cars. The divine God is probably 'prodigal' with love that such acts are not met with divine judgment due to social construct of the adherents.

The impact of neo-Pentecostal churches on AICs is not limited to churches alone, but extends to the *Ori-Oke* phenomenon. It is interesting to note that elements of marketing and merchandising that neo–Pentecostal churches have criticized (Ayegboyin 2005) resonate in some of the *Ori-Oke*. The convergence of this development is that the prosperity commonly associated with neo-Pentecostal churches have made an inroad to the *Ori-Oke*. It is apt to note that the health and wealth ideology of AICs, or Nigeria's neo-Pentecostal churches resonates with the indigenous African worldviews. The preoccupation of these two Christian traditions with the pursuit of 'the good things of life' within the larger context of the African traditional worldview amounts to the rebranding of indigenous cosmology in Pentecostal and AICs discourse. This perspective is succinctly illustrated by Adogame's example that the 'Yoruba phrase/song: *Owo, Omo, Alafia Repetet* (Money, Children, Good Health) sung by the Yoruba at thanksgiving rituals, best embodies the significance of health and wealth for believers (Adeboye, 2013).

Most Prophets leading *Ori-Oke* and neo-Pentecostal leaders at campgrounds have created numerous gateways to psychologically compel their congregants to give all kinds of offerings at religious meetings, including specially styled offerings such as sacrifice

offering, building offering, faith offering, prophet offering, thanksgiving, miracle seed, or seed offering. Therefore, these two Christian traditions seem commercialized, packaged as an attractive product to compete in a competitive market place. Market theory discourse argues that marketing strategies enable religious leaders to exploit religious 'shoppers' by selling their books, video and audio tapes, as well as all manners of wares, using the sales techniques honed in the secular marketplace.

There are dynamic economic interactions that are highly transactional in sacred places particularly in the AICs and neo-Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. This development has changed significantly the initial conceptualisation of the *Ori-Oke* phenomenon as well as those of the campgrounds. The campgrounds of denominations like Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries and the Redemption Camp of the RCCG provide a vista of opportunity to understand the economic power of neo-Pentecostal churches in the socio-economic development of their religious sensibilities, because both denominations have transformed their sacred sites to Christian cities. The social and infrastructural facilities at the Redemption Camp and Mountain of Fire and Miracles Campground on Lagos-Ibadan Expressway are a big difference from what is obtainable in various cities across Nigeria. This is a far cry from the epileptic public and social infrastructural facilities some states in Nigeria provide for their citizens. However, could this perfect model constitute a contemporary brand of celestial-mindedness embellished in health and wealth orientation for neo-Pentecostal camp owners and residents? Nevertheless, such an assertion requires a lot of restraints, as the members of these churches and those seeking the transcendental are still physical beings, yet to attain the celestial state, but are living within the state of their religious commitments. The AICs leadership should take a cue from the neo-Pentecostal churches' rebranding of sacred phenomenon with a contemporary twist to meet the consumer-oriented needs of their clientele and possibily sustaining and recruiting more adherents from other Christian traditions. Pastor E. A. Adeboye, recently established Mount Carmel, a prayer retreat center, located in his home town,

Ifewara, Osun state. The modern facilities include chalets and prayer huts for each visitor for personal supplications. Mount Carmel has all modern infrastructural facilities that are deficient in most *Ori-Oke* in the South West of Nigeria. The initiation of this project demonstrates the degree of innovation of Pastor E. A. Adeboye to sustain and enhance his religious influence and provide what the 'religious consumers' desire with a contemporary flavour.

Gender sensitivity is a major limiting factor on use of some *Ori-Oke*. For instance, *Ori-Oke Akinkemi,* situated at Ona Ara Local Government of Ibadan, Oyo State, is strictly for men; no female is allowed on the mountain. The gender inequality in many of the AICs inevitably has limited the patronage of the females to some of the *Ori-Oke*. However, such a barrier is non-existent in campgrounds owned by neo-Pentecostal churches. Equality between the sexes is the theological perception of most neo-Pentecostal churches like the RCCG, which ordains women as pastors under the leadership of Pastor Adeboye. It is apt to submit that the ordination of a female was a by-product of the internal renewal of RCCG under E. A. Adeboye's leadership, contrasting with the leadership of the late Rev Josiah Akindayomi, the founder of RCCG. The matter of gender might be a matter of time, as the dynamic forces of social change necessitate a shift in the current stance of AICs. The female gender seemingly constitutes the highest number in attendance in most religious programmes.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated in this study, that the creativity and innovative nature of neo-Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, through apt knowledge and sensibilities to the African traditional worldview has led to the appropriating, repackaging and redefining of *Ori-Oke* to meet the existential challenges of their clientele. The appropriation of the public space has not in any way identified Nigeria's neo-Pentecostal churches from their pneuma centric traditions, as well as their health and wealth ideologies. The leadership of AICs might be out of business, if the renewal of their traditions fails to appreciate

the changing social and cultural dynamics and respond positively to the forces of globalization. The *Ori-Oke* phenomenon is gradually becoming glocal, due to a particular approach to the renewal process of the mountain top event. The use of media technology facilities by leaders of AIC, who pioneered and sustain the social construct of *Ori-Oke*, potentially indicates that this Christian tradition is responding positively to modernity. Nevertheless, AICs' *Ori-Oke* and campgrounds of neo-Pentecostal churches in Nigeria provide seemingly contrasting opportunities for consumer-oriented religious adherents to meet with the divine power through the process of socialization in the face of the economic challenges of space contestation.

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Chapter 9

Hierophant and Hierophany in Yoruba Spirituality: *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* in Egbe, Nigeria, as a Case Study

Raymond Ogunade & Gbenga Zaccheaus

Abstract

The nomadic nature of African religion sometimes deprives it of concepts that are attributed to the two major world religions – Christianity and Islam. The concept of Ori-Oke (hierophany), for instance, is usually interpreted as a Christian ideology. Experience has shown that this may not be true. This chapter attempts to demonstrate that the Ori-Oke phenomenon is a common concept in Yoruba religious beliefs and that personification of natural objects as spiritual entities (hierophants) is a direct consequence of the possession of such domains by spiritual beings, as in the case of Ori-Oke Ajaforunti in Egbe, North Central Nigeria. This reality of indigenous perspective presents that natural phenomena become sacred as a result of the resident spirit, which attracts adherents to them for worship. The methodologies employed in this exercise are historical, theological, sociological and interpretative. We also employed oral interview and participant observation as tools to get into the minds of the worshippers of Ori-Oke Ajaforunti and to experience first-hand the practices and rituals involved in their ceremonies. We discovered that despite the incursions of the Christian Community to take custody of Ori-Oke Ajaforunti as a Christian Prayer Mountain, the unflinching faith of the Egbe traditionalists in the Ori-Oke continued to wax stronger.

Introduction

Within the purview of Yoruba Spirituality, certain things are regarded as sacred while others are oppositely profane. To that effect, this discourse avails one to dwell on the former, in relation to an act of showcasing the location of hierophants vis-a-vis hierophanies in Yoruba religion with *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* as a case study. There are key features always found in the African concept of religion. These

features are acknowledged as intrinsic in the discourse and practice of Yoruba religious beliefs. Hierophants and hierophanies exist variably in every religion, and their places cannot be over emphasized. Hierophanies vary in large numbers all over Africa, and as such, are innumerable. They are characterized by mysteries and organized ritual worship. A major feature is that a hierophany must be of great importance to the immediate society before being ascribed such status by the society (Onaiyekan, 1998). This explains why sacredness is attached to virtually every hierophany that exists in African religion.

It is correct to say that Africans take refuge under the mythologies and visible factors of these hierophanies that have warranted their being revered (Oduyoye, 1998). Though the authenticity of a myth is indiscernible, one can take solace in the fact that myths are meant to provide answers to certain mysterious phenomena. Cognisant of the visible evidences to the validity of these myths, one is sometimes compelled to agree with the captivating stories our grandparents enunciated to us as Africans.

Sango of popular Yoruba legend is a household name among the people of Egbe of North Central Nigeria. His contact with *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* has turned the mountain into an object of worship and a place of refuge for the worshippers. The spirituality and the importance of this mountain amongst adherents of indigenous belief in this community have drawn significant attention from Christian worshippers to the mountain, to the point that they want to claim ownership of it.

Meaning of Hierophant and Hierophany

Hierophany refers to a place or entity of worship in any religion. This can be a groove, forest, mountain, a river, crucifix, grail, etc. Hierophanies are sacred and are consecrated places of worship for the adherents because of the in-dwelling presence of deities, spirits and other spiritual entities (Goring, 1995). Hierophanies usually have spiritually chosen personalities, who serve as custodians and devotees. The death of prominent devotees can seemingly affect a

hierophany. 'Hierophants' refer to sources for sacred worship in a hierophany (Goring, 1995), i.e., the spiritual entity dwelling in a hierophany. At times, hierophants are difficult to uncover because of the sacred factors that govern them, though one can say that hierophants may be determined by indigenes of the society. Hierophants are mysterious, such that it is often difficult to comprehend their sources. They are mythological and are only identified with their hierophanies. In this discourse, *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* is a hierophany, consecrated by the legendary sceptre *Oorun* of *Sango*, during his heroic war expeditions.

Yoruba Religion (Yorel) and Spirituality

The Yoruba people of South-Western Nigeria are found in the present-day States of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Ondo, Lagos, and some parts of Kwara and Kogi. The Sub-ethnic groups that are found in Yorubaland are: Ijebu, Oyo, Ife, Ijesa, Akoko, Ekiti, Ikale, Ilaje, Egbado, Okun and Igbomina. By Yoruba religion, we mean the indigenous faith of the Yoruba, which was passed down from through oral traditions, art, crafts, liturgies, pithy sayings, proverbs, folklores, stories, songs and wise sayings. It has no founder, no scriptures and does not possess zeal for membership. It has a natural appeal and most of her adherents are born into it.

Over the years, some non- Yoruba have taken to Yoruba religion (Clarke, 2004). 'Yo' from Yoruba and 'Rel' from Religion combine to create the term 'Yorel' (Ogunade, 2005).The adherents are referred to as 'Yorelians' or 'Yorelists.' These are the adherents of Yoruba religion, just like we have Christians from Christianity, Muslims from Islam and Afrel from African Religion (Dopamu, 1993). The adherents of Afrel are referred to as Afrelist (Ogunade, 2005). The adherents of Yoruba Religion are also qualified to be called Yorelians. The Yorelians 'are everything religious' (Idowu 1962).

Adherents to Yoruba spirituality believe in the existence and Supremacy of God, who is called Olorun, Oluwa, and Olodumare. Apart from these names, He has some attributes. He is the Creator, Unique, Immortal, Omnipotent, King, Judge, Transcendent and

Immanent. *Olodumare* (God) is its central theme. Idowu, 1962; Awolalu, 1981 and Awolalu & Dopamu, 2005 have all researched into the supremacy, names, place and integrity of *Olodumare* among the Yorelists. Apart from the belief in the Supreme Being, the Yoruba people also believe in the existence of divinities and spirits. In Yoruba theology, there are three classifications of divinities: primordial, deified divinities and personification of natural forces and phenomena. The spiritual structure after the divinities includes belief in spirits, ancestors, practice of magic and medicine.

A Brief History of Egbe, Kogi State, Nigeria

This town is an ancient town bordering Kogi and Kwara States. It is surrounded by undulating and luxuriant hills of savannah vegetation which are visible around the town. It is sometimes referred to as 'Jerusalem in Nigeria' (Ethics Origins, 2006). The dialect spoken by these people is called *Okun*. They have ancestry linked to the Yoruba in Nigeria, and they can also speak normal Yoruba language. Their alphabets are similar to that of Yoruba. The town is known for its hospitality and for being located on the federal road axis; it serves as a central location for access to other communities, particularly in the northern part of Nigeria.

Egbe is one of the biggest towns found in Yagbaland with a long history of commercial activities. People come from far and near for commercial and trading purposes. Egbe town is blessed with good and fertile land for agricultural activities. The crops that are grown in this area include: Yam, Corn, Sorghum, Cocoa, Beans, Cassava, Groundnuts (peanuts) and Cotton (Ethics Origins, 2006). Traditionally, they go into clothes weaving which are used during wedding ceremony, especially for the brides. The characteristics of a quiet and natural environment, which are most conducive for learning are found around the town. No wonder in Egbe, and indeed, the entire region of Yagba in Kogi State, it is hard to cover a 500 meter radius without coming across an educational institution. It is not surprising that some of the best brains in Nigeria are products of educational institutions in this region.[1]

Cassiterite, columbite, and tantalite are some of the mineral resources found in Egbe (Ethics Origins, 2006). The presence of missionary activities in this town is dated back to the 20th century when Rev. Tommy Titcombe, a British-born Canadian, and his wife, both missionaries with SIM (Sudan Interior Mission, now Serving In Mission) came to Egbe in 1908 (Http//www.SIM.org). Amidst the odds of the language barrier and malaria mosquito bites, they came into the community, becoming the pioneers of Christianity in the area. They preached the gospel of Christ to the people of Egbe and most *Okun* speaking towns in Kogi State. They were able to start a hospital known today as ECWA Hospital Egbe. The hospital is the biggest, most popular and successful Christian hospital in Kogi State (Http//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecwa_HospitalEgbe). A college was also established called Titcombe College, named after the missionaries and many churches were also planted. (Http//en.wikipedia. org/wiki/ ECWA_ Titcombecollege). *Egbe* has traditional leadership positions, such as *Oba,* or *Baale,* which are synonymous to monarchical positions still subsisting till date.

Historical Antecedent of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* in Egbe

The historical antecedent of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* is a mysterious account documented in the oral tradition, passed down from one generation to another from ancient times. History bases the legend in the heroic expeditions of the popular Yoruba deified ancestor *Sango* (The god of thunder), who was the 4th Alaafin of Oyo.[2] During his last war, *Sango* placed his popular tool of power in the shape of a short double headed axe known as *Oorun* beside the mountain called *Kelai* in Egbe (located near *Okwa* compound) while resting.[3] This act culminated into the name *Aaja-fi-oorun-ti* (one who fought and placed his sceptre/weapon beside mountain *Kelai* in that instance). The panegyric recitation of Egbe postulates *Egbe'mekun ibi ti Sango ti ja to fi oorun ti* (*Egbe'mekun* the land where *Sango* placed his weapon and rested after a valiant battle).

This weapon became the source of power which engulfed the former *Kelai* mountain, and made it sacred.[4] The belief is that *Sango's*

Oorun (axe/sceptre) possessed tremendous and immense spiritual powers. The placement of the *Oorun* by the mountain resulted into a transference of heavy spiritual powers to *Kelai* mountain. This seemingly unconscious act of *Sango* changed the status and the name of the mountain. Hence, mysterious occurrences such as the hurling of stones, pebbles and rocks from the top of the mountain, as well as apparitions of an archer are sometimes recorded around and on top of the mountain.[5] Thus, the mountain became sacred and was popularly known as *Ori-Oke Ajajorunti*. In other words, the mountain became a hierophany in Egbe. It is distinguished with a particular small pit which exists on the mountain top. This pit is very deep, and it is believed that anyone who mistakenly falls inside will be found at the outskirt of the town three days later, dead.[6]

Fig 1: *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* Egbe

In the same vein, during this period, a very powerful warrior who was a perpetual dweller on *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* became extensively possessed with the spirit of *Ajaforunti*. Thus, he was addressed as *Ajaforunti* himself and was seen as the visible personality behind this mysterious mountain. He allegedly became like a 'reincarnated Sango' of Egbe. This was because of his extraordinary spiritual prowess, which was proven in his numerous heroic conquests.[7] He was said to have been very powerful, have premonitions of wars, and appear and disappear on the mountain sporadically in order to have view the

town and to see from afar the invasion of the enemies. Peculiarly, he would always hold a bow and arrow, for use against the enemies in defence of his community. He shot the arrows from the mountain and effectively killed the enemies at the war fronts. Thus, he made Egbe renowned for war victories at that time and was honoured by neighbouring villages.[8]

Fig 2: The statue of the warrior, symbolizing the spirit of *Ajaforunti* at the entrance of Egbe town

The re-incarnated spirit of *Sango* in *Ajaforunti* became so powerful that he was dreaded by all. People heeded his warnings and precautions, because he would envisage any predicament that was to befall the community. He was known for tremendous tricks and stratagems of defeat. One very spectacular instance was narrated by a respondent.[9] It was recorded that during a particularly threatening war that was to befall Egbeland, *Ajaforunti* sent out spiritual maidens to the war front to sell poisonous bean cakes (*Akara*) to the enemies, which they all ate and perished. However, *Ajaforunti* had warned his people to abstain from eating anything from strangers at that period, cognisant of his plan. This interesting incident explains why devotees of *Ajaforunti* made it a taboo for indigenes of Egbe to eat carelessly from strangers.[10] Thus, *Ajaforunti* was the reason behind the

dominance of Egbe over the foes. *Ajaforunti* was never accused of any predicament. This brought about the eulogy of *Egbe'mekun* (*Egbe* the Tiger) which can be seen in the popular emblem of the community. *Ajaforunti* symbolizes victory, bravery and domination. It is the symbol of the land of Egbe.

Fig 3: The emblem of Egbe as '*Egbe* the Tiger"

Ajaforunti was known for many years of mysterious, heroic activities. Unfortunately, the account of his death and how long he lived was not recorded precisely. It was lost in oblivion, due to lack of written documentation caused by the illiteracy of that time.[11] Arising from the foregoing, the people of the community deemed it fit to venerate the spirit of *Ajaforunti*. He was raised to the status of a divinity, known as *Orisa Ajaforunti*. His statue was established with his recognizable emblem of bow and arrow. This statue also commemorates *Sango* as an object of worship, i.e. a hierophant in Egbe, while the hierophany is the *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti*. Specifically, factors constituting worship on the mountain were designed and organized to be carried out by the *Kati* family of *Odo Egbe,* who were chosen by the oracle as custodians of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* and have consistently lived at the base of the mountain.[12]

Ori-Oke Ajaforunti as the Hierophany of Egbe

Just as the features of a hierophant connote, it can be deduced that the society was responsible for designing everything that constituted the worship of this deity: the name given to it, its preferences in terms of sacrifices and worship, its hierophany, its taboos, and so on. Over the years, the worship of *Ajaforunti* as the epicentre of other gods of the land spread to the nooks and crannies of the community, among the traditionalists. This was intensified before the missionary activities of the S.I.M (Sudan Interior Mission) led by Rev. Tommy Titcombe. The worship of *Ajaforunti* as a brave deity became rampant, such that warriors went to the mountain to pray and perform certain sacrificial rites to invoke the spirit of *Ajaforunti* to supervise their victory. They poured libations, made incarnations and eulogized the spirit of *Ajaforunti*. Animals were slaughtered in accordance to the request of the devotees.[13]

It is believed that the spirit of *Ajaforunti* still appears on the mountain to anyone at any time. At the appearance of the spirit of *Ajaforunti*, holding his bow and arrow, most witnesses are said to be highly scared. However, when they attempt to call another person to come and see, *Ajaforunti* always disappears (apparently causing most witnesses to be disbelieved).[14] This warranted the efforts made by the devotees of *Ajaforunti* to establish that the appearance of the spirit to certain people are attempts by the spirit to show himself to those who disbelieve his existence.[15] However, the spirit has no intention to harm anybody. People are admonished to be calm when it appears and not to attempt to call anybody. This explains why it appears only to one person at a time. The pit on the mountain was ordered to be covered in order to secure those who climb the mountain for spiritual and tourism purposes.[16]

The Place of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* Today

The worship of *Ajaforunti* flourished in the community for many years, until the advent of Tommy Titcombe and his wife. Gradually, Titcombe succeeded in reducing the number of adherents and their

loyalty to *Ajaforunti* as a hierophant. Something happened then. *Egbe* suffered a short period of drought and serious famine. The rulers deemed it fit to gather all the traditionalists, including the devotees of *Ajaforunti* to pray for rainfall in the land. Be that as it may, their efforts were abortive until the interference of Tommy Titcombe. He prayed to his God, the Christian God, and there was rain. With this divine intervention to this severe problem, coupled with some other healing miracles, he won the hearts of many people in *Egbe*, who became interested in the religion he had to offer. Following the disappointment of the devotees of *Ajaforunti,* many today have lost their zeal for the worship of *Ajaforunti*. Only a minority, including the devoted *Okwa* compound of *Kati* family, remain persistent.[17]

One Professor Akolo was responsible for erecting the statue of *Ajaforunti* at the entrance of the town called the *Pepelebe* (strategic point of the town). This was to commemorate *Ajaforunti* as a legend, not for the deity to be worshipped at that spot, taking cognizance of the fact that its hierophany is the *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti*.[18] This location is meant to serve as a tourist centre, popularly known as *Ojokedo* relaxation centre. Due to the fact that Christianity has dominated the community at the detriment of the indigenous religion, the statue was ordered to be removed by the late Oba of Egbe, Chief Kayode Owa, through the influence of the Christian leaders in the community. Consequently, the statue was removed, and was carried away to a police station in the land.[19] The Christian community also attempted to change the name of the mountain to St. John Mountain, though this was vehemently resisted by the devotees of *Ajaforunti*. They welcome Christians who throng the place for prayers and silent meditation in the spirit of tolerance and understanding that indigenous belief is known for.[20]

As a result of the foregoing, speculations were made that the removal of the statue was consequential. The death of the late king and the head labourer that executed the removal might be attributed to the wrath of the spirit of *Ajaforunti*. It was claimed that all those involved in the desecration of the statue faced repercussions.[21] However, some people opined that it was just a natural occurrence, perhaps coincidental.[22] This remains a controversial issue for which

this discourse has no concern. It is not the interest of this work to assess the authenticity of the above claim, just as it is unscholarly to be quick in making such conclusions.

What we know for sure is that Christianity is the predominant religion of the land today, and it has succeeded in overtaking the cult of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* and Yorel. This defends the claim that the religious character of the Africans is to abandon their own religion at the acceptance of Western religions (black microcosm). Today in Egbe we can find little Yorelists and devotees of *Ajaforunti*. However, the spirit of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* still permeates the mountain, and the devotees live at its base and engage in their worship and ceremonies, as dictated by the oracle, even though their population is reduced.

Conclusion

We have seen clearly from the foregoing that the concept of *Ori-Oke* (Prayer Mountain), is not peculiar to Christian ideology. The case of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* in Yoruba religious belief among the Egbe people is evidence of this fact. We have also seen that natural phenomena become the objects of spiritual activities, because of their in-dwelling presence of spiritual forces, such as the case of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti,* unlike Prayer Mountains in Christianity that become sacred as a result of the heavy spiritual patronage from praying Christians.

There is the tendency to conclude that indigenous accounts like those of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* are myths. But historical narratives, eye witnesses' testimonies, tangible symbols, emblems and the fact that the worshippers and devotees of the hierophany under discussion are still alive and embrace their faith strongly, are evidences that the cultural heritage may be hard to press into extinction.

We also discovered the accommodating, tolerant, understanding and enduring nature of indigenous belief and its adherents in the sharing of *Ori-Oke Ajaforunti* with their Christian brothers and sisters, a virtue that is rare in our pursuit of peaceful co-existence with people of other faiths.

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Chapter 10

Ori- Oke in Old Testament Traditions and its Economic Benefits in Igbeti Community, Oyo State

Caleb O. Ogunkunle

Abstract

The mountain in the scriptures, especially in the Old Testament, is a sacred place of worship, where God reveals Himself and manifests his glory. Several individuals used mightily by God were associated with one mountain or the other. However, in recent times, and in light of social change in contemporary Christianity, in Africa in general, and Nigeria, in particular, Ori-Oke has been associated with all sorts of things including economic benefits. This paper examines current trends in Nigerian Christianity, and looks at how Prayer Mountains have become a source of economic benefits for individual founders, an act which was foreign in the biblical mountain tradition. Specifically, the paper looks at what is happening in contemporary Nigerian society, with reference to the Igbeti Community of Oyo State. Historical and exegetical methods are used in the paper. The historical method is adopted to review related literature on mountains in Biblical tradition, with emphasis on Mount Sinai, while the exegetical method helps in the interpretation of key words in the passage. This is corroborated with oral interviews with some selected founders, pastors and prophets. It is observed that several people patronize Ori-Oke, as a result of chronic problems that are confronting them. Invariably, many people go to Ori-Oke not only to worship, but to ask for solutions to their problems. The paper concludes that the main purpose of Ori-Oke is to worship, pray and receive revelation from God; hence, less emphasis should be placed on their economic benefits, especially by the founders or leaders the of Ori-Oke.

Introduction

Ordinarily, mountains in ancient Israel are associated with places of worship, where God reveals Himself and demonstrates His power. However, the rate at which several individuals patronize *Ori-Oke* in

contemporary Nigerian society, calls for a reflection on the motive behind visiting Prayer Mountains. Perhaps, too much rush for *Ori-Oke* is connected with the level of hardship that people are going through in the nation. The current economic recession has worsened the matter, as the deplorable situation seems unbearable for the majority of the people in the nation. One of the places where people who believe in prayers look for solutions to their predicaments is *Ori-Oke*.

Therefore, the focus of this paper is to reconcile the use of mountains in Biblical tradition, with an emphasis on Mount Sinai, with the rush of people going to *Ori-Oke* in contemporary Nigerian society, with reference to Igbeti community in Oyo State. Indeed, there appears to be some changes in the understanding of mountains in Ancient Israel and *Ori-Oke* in contemporary Nigerian society, especially in terms of economic benefits. *Ori-Oke* is a compound Yoruba word that is made up of *Ori* (head or top) and *Oke* (mountain or hill). Hence *Ori-Oke* in this context means 'mountain top.' *Ori-Oke* is used interchangeably with Prayer Mountain in this paper.

Mountains in Old Testament Tradition

The Hebrew word *har* which is a masculine noun generally means mountain, hill, or hill country. Specifically, it means high elevation, such as Mount Sinai (Exod 19: 1; 18; 20; 23; 24: 16; 31: 18; 34: 2; 4; 29; 32 etc.); mountain range (Psa 68: 16); high mountain (Isa 30: 23; 40: 9; 52: 7); mountain as opposite of valley (Josh 12: 8; Deut 1: 7); mountains as hiding places (Judges 6: 2; Psa 11: 1; Jer 16: 16); mountains as running places of gazelles (1 Chro 12: 8); mountains as grazing places for cattle (Psa 50: 10; Job 39: 8; Job 40: 20); mountains as places of field and vineyard (2 Chro 26: 10; Isa 7: 23; Psa 147: 8); and mountains as a place of illicit worship (Isa 65: 7; Jer 3: 6; and Isa 57: 7) (Brown, Drivers &Briggs: 1989, pp. 249-50). The word *har* is also used to mean hill country or mountain region, and in this case, it means the dwelling place of the Canaanites (Num 13: 17, 29), or of a particular mountain region as in Deut 1: 7. The word *har* occurs about 550 times in the Old Testament. The first appearance speaks

of the mountain range upon which Noah's ark came to rest (Unger & White: 1980, p. 251). The word *har* is found in both singular as in Josh 17: 18; Psa 78: 54; Job 14: 18; etc., and plural *(harim)* as in Deut 11: 11 and Micah 6: 2.

The words 'mountain' and 'hill' are used interchangeably in the Bible to represent an elevated terrain or region. The mountain in Ancient Israel was a symbol of refuge and security, and sometimes, a threatening place of military slaughter. The mountain is a place of vision (Deut 34: 1-4; Rev 2: 10); a place of proclamation (Isa 40: 9; 52: 7; Mat 5: 1); a place of covenant making, law giving and covenant renewal (Exod 19-20; Deut 9-10) and a place for cursing and blessing (Deut 27-8) (Ryken, Wilhoit & Longman: 1998, p. 572). Unger and White see mountains as a symbol of safety and protection, as shown by Jacob, who fled from Laban towards the mountains, where he thought of getting protection. They argue further that mountains serve as a symbol of strength (Zech 4: 7); sacred areas (Jer 3: 22-23); and location of strong fortress (1980).

Writing on the sacredness of mountains, Ryken, Wilhoit and Longman III (1998) argue that mountains are 'sites of transcendent spiritual appearances, encounters with God or appearances of God.' Examples include: Abraham, who was willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac on a mountain (Gen 22: 1-14); God's appearance to Moses while speaking to him from the burning bush on Horeb, the mountain of God (Exod 3: 1-2); Elijah's encounter with God on the same mountain (1 Kgs 19: 8-18); and Moses in a cloud on Mount Sinai (Exod 19). Talmon opines that mountains appear in the Old Testament tradition as the preferred sites for the theophany (Gen 24: 14; Exod 3: 1; 4: 27; 18: 5; 19-20; 32; 34; Deut 4: 11; 5: 4; 9: 15; I Kgs 19: 11-14; Mic 1: 3; Ps 18: 7-10; 17: 4-5; etc.). He also associates mountains as the place where God establishes His covenant with individuals (Gen 31: 54) (Talmon, 1978).

In addition, Talmon (1978) observes that Old Testament literature uses the terminology of human body to refer to the various parts of a mountain. For example the term *rosh* (top, peak) is used in connection with mountain in Exod 19: 18-20; Num 20: 28; Josh 15: 8-9; and Isa 42: 11). *Katheph* (shoulder or slope) is used in defining

boundaries (Josh 15: 8-11; Num 34: 11; Isa 11: 14; Ezek 25: 9); *tsela* (side) is used in 2 Sam 16: 13; and *tachith* (foot) is used in Exod 19: 17; 24: 4; 32: 19; Deut 4: 11.

The Greek word for mountain is *oros*. Incidentally, Jesus Christ is associated with mountains in the New Testament. Jesus Christ resorted to mountain to be alone (John 6: 15), to pray (Mat 14: 23; Mark 1: 35; 6: 46; Lk 6: 12), and to teach his disciples (Mat 5: 1; Mark 3: 13 (Foerster: 1985, p. 733). It was on a mountain that Jesus resisted Satan's temptation (Mat 4: 8; Lk 4: 5); He was transfigured on a mountain (Mat 17: 1-8; Mk 9: 2-8; Lk 9: 28-36) and He ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1: 10-12). (Ryken; Wilhoit & Longman, 1998).

Mount Sinai

There are several mountains in the Bible. Some of the important ones are Ararat, Carmel, Ebal, Hermon, Hor, Horeb, Lebanon, Moriah, Nebo, Olivet, Pisgah, Sinai, Tabor and Zion. Our focus at this junction is to examine Mount Sinai with a view of understanding the primary purpose of mountains in Ancient Israel. Two issues need clarification in an attempt to understand Mount Sinai. The first one is to clarify the name 'Sinai' and the other is to examine the importance of the mountain.

The word 'Sinai' is used in three senses. One, it speaks of the Peninsula, an inverted triangle between the two arms of the Red Sea, with the Gulf of Suez on the West and the Gulf of Aqabah on the East. The base of the triangle is approximately 150 miles long, and it forms a barrier between Palestine and Egypt. Secondly, the word 'Sinai' is used of the wilderness of 'Sinai,' the place where the Israelites came in the third month, after they left Egypt (Exod 19: 11). Thirdly, the word is used for the Mount Sinai, which is also called Horeb (Exod 19: 20). It was on this mountain that God talked with Moses and gave him the laws that would guide the relationship between the Israelites and God and the relationship between one another.

The significance of Mount Sinai lies in the fact that it was there that Moses, the leader of the Israelite nation and the mediator between God and the people, received the Ten Commandments and other laws from Yahweh. It was at Mount Sinai that Moses requested the Pharaoh that Israel might be allowed to worship her God (Exod 3: 18; 5: 1; 7: 6; 8: 27; 28). Writing on the presence of Yahweh with the Israelites in their journey to the Promised Land, Dillard and Longman (1995, p. 67) opine that:

Perhaps the single and most important occurrence during the journey took place just three months after their departure, when they arrived at Mount Sinai. Here God made his powerful presence known to them again as he revealed his will to Israel through the law.

Specifically, an inductive study of the passage indicates the following about Mount Sinai:

1. It was a place where Moses met with God and received instructions from Him. Exod 19: 3-6 says:

> Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to say to the people of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.

Indeed, God had a special interest in the Israelites as shown in their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage and the carrying of them on eagles' wings. As they camped by Sinai, Moses went to the mountain and it was there God spoke to him.

2. Mount Sinai was a place to hear the voice of Yahweh (Exod 19: 9). The Lord appeared to Moses in a dense cloud upon the mountain from where the people would hear Him speaking to Moses.

It has been suggested that, 'the reason for the manifestation on this occasion seems to have been that the people should believe in the reality of God's communication with Moses, and thus, believe in Moses, as well as in God' (Cole, 1973). This means that nobody had the excuse of not understanding what Yahweh was about to do.

3. Mount Sinai was a place of divine manifestation (Exod 19: 16). It was on the third day of camping on Mount Sinai that God manifested His glory in the midst of thunders, lightings and thick clouds. Keil and Delitzsch (1981: p. 102) note that 'thunder and lightning bursting forth from the thick cloud, and fire with smoke, were the elementary substrata, which rendered the glory of the divine nature visible to men, though in such a way that the eye of mortals beheld no form of the natural and invisible Deity.' These natural phenomena were accompanied by a loud trumpet which made everyone in the camp tremble.

4. It was a place where Yahweh came down to meet Moses (Exod 19: 20). Only Moses (Exod 19: 20) and Aaron (Exod 19: 24) were permitted on the mountain. All other priests, and the congregation, were to stand before the mountain. Incidentally, Moses made three trips to the mountain top and back (Exod 19: 3, 7-9, 20 and 25). One important document which Moses received from Yahweh on the mountain is the law which has three components namely, the Decalogue (Exod 20: 1-21), the Book of the Covenant with civil and religious ordinaries (Exod 20: 22-24: 11) and ceremonial regulations (24: 12-31: 18) (Hannah: 1985, p. 139).

Ori-Oke in Contemporary Nigeria

Ori-Oke is generally an open place of worship on a hill or mountain that is open to individuals, irrespective of religious background and denominational affiliation. It is a sacred place of withdrawal from the hustle and bustle of life. Some hills or mountains have either temporary or permanent structures, with resident pastors, prophets or prophetesses to assist those who are there for spiritual

assistance (Ayegboyin and Ishola, 2013). Alokan notes that these mount and hill tops have developed into centres for worship, conventions, tourism and education (2010). There are at least five Prayer Mountains in Ilorin metropolis. These are: *Oke Sobi, Oke Basin, Oke Alagbede, Oke Michael Imodu* and *Oke Tanke*. People from different denominations go to these mountains for prevailing prayer. One of my sources is of the opinion that *Ori-Oke* is a place of outreach, as many of the people that come for programme do not attend any church in the town. He observed that some of them, on their way to the farm, take off time to seek for counsel and prayer from the man of God on the mountain (Pastor Iyiade Asamu).

The theology of *Ori-Oke* is well known in Nigeria, especially among the Yoruba of the South-West of the country, where Christ Apostolic Church, one of the African Indigenous Churches, has its roots. In other words, Christ Apostolic Church, since its inception, has been associated with *Ori- Oke*. Doctrinally, Christ Apostolic Church believes strongly in the efficacy of prayer alongside fasting. This explains why all branches of Christ Apostolic Church have prayer bands, *Egbe afadurajagun* which literally means 'prayer warriors' who keep the prayer life of the churches alive (Ayogboyin and Ishola, 2013). Writing on the prayer life of Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola, Alokan observes that Babalola's prayer life was similar to that of Jesus Christs', who was in the habit of occasionally withdrawing from the crowd to a mountain, or hill top for issues that needed serious intercessions, or for renewing his spiritual power. Some of the important mountains and hills consecrated for prevailing praying, fasting and communication with God are: *Oke-Isegun (Efon Alaaye), Oke-Aanu (Erio Ekiti), Oke-Iyanu (Ido Ajinare), Oke-Ajaye (Ajaye), Oke-Epinmi (Akoko), Oke-Babalola (Odo Owa), Oke-Ikoyi (Ikoyi)*, etc. Apostle Ayodele Babalola had regular special prayers on *Ori-Oke* ranging from 3 to 51 days long (Alokan, 2010).

Narrating the experience of Joseph Ayo Babalola on *Ori-Oke,* Dayo Oluwamakin states that at one of Babalola`s Prayer Mountains at Omu Aran in Kwara State, the man prayed for forty days and nights, till his sweat formed the shape of his body on the floor. Another time, when Joseph Babalola had a prolonged prayer, rock

melted to make everlasting marks from the two knees that touched the rock (2010). Indeed, *Ori-Oke* meant much to the spiritual life and ministry of Joseph Ayo Babalola. He was said to have encouraged members of the church to persist in prevailing prayer, through which there would be solutions to problems confronting them. (Alokan, 2010). Following the instruction and example of Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola, every leader in the church today (pastor, evangelist, prophet, prophetess, etc.) takes time to visit *Ori-Oke* to pray asking God for sign, revelation and direction in the ministry. One of my sources says the name given to each assembly in Christ Apostolic Church such as *Oke-Ayo*, (Mount of Joy), *Oke-Alaafia* (Mount of Peace), *Oke-Isegun* (Mount of Victory), *Oke-Aanu* (Mount of Mercy), etc., is usually received from *Ori-Oke* (Pastor Arogbonlo).

Ori-Oke in Igbeti Community

Geographically, Igbeti is centrally placed with Ilorin, Kwara State capital to her East; Ogbomoso and Ikoyi-Ile (Orire Local Government) to her south, Igboho, Kisi, Ogbooro and Saki, among others to her West, and Old Oyo (Oyo Ile) National Park and Banni, to her North (Ogunkunle, 2016). Igbeti is the headquarters of Iyamopo/Olorunsogo Local Government of Oyo State. The town is located in the midst of several hills and mountains which include the *Iyamopo, Santo, Erugba, Abosino, Okin, Iyawure, Agbomola, Ogbaagba, Agbale, Obadimo, Aboyun-Ogun, Okuta Opo, Ile- odoodo, Ogbo, Onto and Esin*.

Two important facts must be mentioned about the Igbeti community which are relevant to this paper. One, the original settlers in the community took the hills and mountains as their source of security. Thus, with the advancements of Uthman Dan Fodio (Fulani Jihadist) towards Old Oyo *(Oyo Ile)*, there was a forced amalgamation of the various settlements under a strong bond of oath *(imule)* to forge a common front against the invaders. The amalgamated settlement then moved to the top of *Iyamopo* Mountain and camped at a place referred to as House of Oath *(Ile-Imule)* or *Ile-Igbeti*, till date. The rock was strongly fortified with a thick mud fence, and the people united

courageously and methodically to have victory over the Jihadists and other invaders during the Yoruba wars of the ancient Oyo kingdom. The amalgamated settlement eventually moved back to the rich valley to settle down. The fact that they were unconquerable made them to adopt the name *Agbati* (unconquerable) which has eventually metamorphosed into Igbeti. (See Ogunkunle: 2016, pp. 15-16 for another side of the story).

Secondly, the original settlers in the community worshipped each of these hills and mountains. This is still done, as the people in the community believe that there are spirits living inside the hills that are capable of protecting and granting their requests. The coming of Christianity into the Igbeti community has made a significant impact on the people, and it has brought a lot of development to the community. Significantly, some pastors, prophets, prophetesses have taken over some of the hills as *Ori- Oke* where prevailing prayers are offered. Five of the *Ori- Oke* in Igbeti community are discussed below:

1. *Oke Igbala* (Mount of Salvation)

Oke Igbala was established in 1970 by Prophet James Adegbiji Ishola of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Igbeti. The *Ori-Oke* is open to everybody, irrespective of religion and denomination to pray and meet with God for the morning, afternoon, night vigil or the whole day. Individual groups are also welcome to pray on the mountain. As the Lord led the founder of the mountain, testimonies abound, as to how the *Ori- Oke* has become a place of prayer for freedom from bondages of the devil, such as sickness, poverty and debt. It has also been a place where souls are won into the kingdom of God.

2. *Oke Kosounti* (Mount of Possibility)

This was founded in 2000 by Rev. A.A Oladebo of the Holy Ghost Sanctuary, Igbeti. The mountain is attended by different people from different religions: Christians, Muslims, traditional worshippers, Yoruba, Hausa, Tiv, Idoma, among others. The goal of establishing the *Ori-Oke* is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and

to set captives free. The founder, following the example of Jesus Christ argues that individuals must be led by the Holy Spirit to establish a Prayer Mountain, or go to any of the mountains to pray. The *Ori- Oke* is a place where there is no secrecy from God. In other words, it is a place where one is opened to God to perform His miracles.

3. *Oke Aanu* (Mount of Mercy)

This was established in 2008 by Rev. I.K. Ogundiran, the current minister in charge of First Baptist Church, Igbeti. The founder said that his vision came from God who asked him to establish the *Ori-Oke* for salvation of mankind, deliverance from bondage of Satan, freedom of the captives and breakthroughs in life and business. Several people comprising Christians, Muslims and traditional worshippers, from within and outside of Igbetiland even outside of Nigeria, have visited the mountain. There have been testimonies of healing and deliverance in the lives of people who attend the *Ori-Oke.*

4. *Oke Isegun* (Mount of Victory)

This *Ori-Oke* was founded in 2009 by Rev. Moses Adedokun, who originally was a member of United Missionary Church of Africa, Igbeti. The vision for the establishment of the mountain came from God, for the purpose of salvation of mankind, as well as deliverance from the shackles of the enemy, for the edification of new converts and for breakthrough in life. People from different denominations visit the *Ori-Oke,* along with Muslims and traditional worshippers. Even though the problems confronting the nation are numerous and life is becoming unbearable for many, members are told that all will soon be well, and that people should pray unto the Lord.

5. *Oke Kara*

This is the newest of all the Prayer Mountains in Igbeti. It was established in 2014 by Pastor Charles Emeka who was originally a student Pastor at United Missionary Church of Africa, Jerusalem, Igbeti. *Kara* is the name of the area where the mountain is located, as the founder is yet to give a specific name. Incidentally, the young

pastor has charisma, and he is gifted in pastoral/ prophetic ministration. The main purpose of the *Ori-Oke* was to get a conducive environment for prayer and worship. He said that the Lord led him to current location of *Ori-Oke,* when bees drove him away from his former location two years ago. He says that since he came to this mountain, the Lord has been doing great things on the mountain in terms of salvation of souls for the kingdom of God, healing of sickness and deliverance from the bondage of Satan. According to him, the purpose of the mountain is to raise soldiers for Christ in all churches; teach them the undiluted word of Christ; make an impact on the lives of the less privileged; fill the gaps that churches have left open through carelessness and have personal encounters with the Lord, among others.

Economic Benefits of *Ori- Oke* in Igbeti Community

There is no doubt that Christianity has made a significant impact in the Igbeti Community. The function of *Ori-Oke* in the community, changed from places for traditional worshippers to Christian worship centres, is commendable. Obviously, the presence of several *Ori-Oke* in the community has become a source of financial and economic benefits to both the worshippers and founders of the *Ori- Oke.*

It is appropriate at this point to briefly discuss the *Ori-Oke* issue in the light of the scale of preference, an economic theory that is used in this chapter to explore the economic benefits of *Ori-Oke* in the Igbeti community. Scale of preference by definition is a list of unsatisfied wants arranged in the order of their relative importance. In other words, it is the ranking of desires according to their relative importance. That is, the most pressing wants come first, and the least pressing ones come last. It is after the first desire on the list has been satisfied that there will be room for the satisfaction of the next (Ande, 2012). The importance of this theory deals with helping individuals or groups meet their maximum satisfaction, using their limited resources and helping them to make the right choices, when it comes to allocating scarce resources. Scale of preference illustrates the wants of an economic agent, which may be individuals, firms or

governments in a hierarchical form, starting with the highest priority. Muktar opines that, since the relative intensity and desirability given to the want of economic agents differs and varies, it becomes pertinent to scale their wants, according to the preference order, so as to achieve maximum satisfaction with the limited resources at their disposal.

From the supply side, the scale of preference can be an important tool to an organization or individual traders, when a choice is to be made and economic activities are to be undertaken. It enables firms or individual traders to throw resources where priority is given, taking cognizance of various economic factors and market indices. The scale of preference holds so much relevance in economic reality, that its application can be seen in deciding not just the material to be purchased, but also the economic activities of a firm, amidst others. Unlike the individual, whose preference may be scaled according to his taste, fashion, the weather condition, price and so on, the firm's decision is drawn from the consideration of returns on investment, profit potentials, cost effectiveness, and so on. It allows for optimal allocation and efficient utilization of scarce resources.

Applying this theory to Igbeti community, it is obvious that different people derive economic benefits from *Ori-Oke* in the community. On the part of individual worshippers within and outside of the community, their spiritual and financial needs are met, as seen in the number of *Ori-Oke* in the community. Testimonies as to how worshippers have prayed for economic and financial breakthrough on the *Ori-Oke* and had God answer them abound. One of my informants told me of a testimony of one of his members who was on a mountain to pray. As he was praying, another person who was on the same mountain to pray for a different thing heard him, and the Lord used that man to meet the others' financial need. The man came back home thanking God for answering his prayer (Pastor Bojuwade).

The founders of *Ori-Oke* in the Igbeti community as well as the pastors and prophets attached to them, do experience economic benefits from time to time. These charismatic pastors/prophets are able to prayerfully identify various needs of the worshippers;

contextualize such needs in the Bible and offer prayers with prophetic declaration for the worshippers. As God intervenes in the lives of these worshippers after the prayers on *Ori-Oke,* it is normal and natural for worshippers to come back to appreciate the men of God. Some of the worshippers who make pledges and vows during prayers come back to redeem such pledges/vows. With such financial gifts, pledges and vows, the founders, pastors and prophets are economically empowered to purchase their most pressing needs in their scale of preference. In fact, some of the founders have started to construct a befitting and permanent structure on the *Ori-Oke* in the community. Our research has shown that most of the *Ori-Oke* in Igbeti community are owned by individual pastors and prophets, most of whom have their congregations in the town. An example is Rev. I.K Ogundiran, the pastor in charge of First Baptist Church, Igbeti, who is also the founder of *Oke-Aanu* (Mount of Mercy), which is not under the administration of First Baptist Church, Igbeti. Therefore, for each of these pastors/prophets/evangelists to have a sacred mountain for prayer and worship, in addition to the places of worship in the town, is a source of additional income to them.

On the part of traders in the community, the times of programmes in any of the *Ori-Oke* are periods of economic benefit, as traders make it a priority to stock their shops with essential items such as toothpaste, soap, toilet rolls, face towels, 'pure' water, writing materials, and so on. Of course, the food vendors are not left out in making food and snacks available to the worshippers. The traders, with their limited resources, make sure that these essential items are purchased before the *Ori-Oke* prayer times, knowing fully well that the items will be sold with profit made. As for the worshippers, these essential items are the most pressing needs, which they have no option but to purchase, because they cannot go elsewhere to buy them.

Motorcycle is a common means of transportation in Igbeti community. This means that the motorcycle (Okada) riders are not left out of the economic benefits of *Ori-Oke* in the community. The season for any of the *Ori-Oke* is a period of brisk business for *Okada* riders, as worshippers need their services to take them to and from

the venue *Ori-Oke*. Even while the programme is going on at *Ori-Oke,* the *Okada* riders station themselves at the base of *Ori-Oke* for any worshippers who need their services.

Evaluation and Concluding Remarks

The following facts are obvious from this research. One, *Ori-Oke* in Ancient Israel were places of worship, revelation and receiving instruction and law from Yahweh, as noted in Exodus 19: 1-25. Incidentally, *Ori-Oke* in Nigerian society was originally well utilized, managed and controlled, as ministers such as Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola were there to seek divine assistance and solutions to chronic problems such as sickness, among others. However, things have changed in recent times, as there are proliferations of *Ori-Oke,* especially in the last two decades as shown in the samples from Igbeti community.

Secondly, in Exodus 19, only Moses and Aaron were allowed to come up on the mountain Sinai to receive law from Yahweh, while all others were mandated to stay at the base of the mountain. This is not the case in the contemporary society as *Ori- Oke* are opened to all people irrespective of ethnic and religious background. Anyone can go up to the *Ori- Oke* at any time of the day or night. The only thing is that some of the *Ori-Oke* have rules and regulations that worshippers must abide to. For example, in some *Ori -Oke*, no one is allowed to wear shoes or scandals. In some other *Ori- Oke,* ladies are not allowed to put on trousers, or put on earrings and everything must be kept at the base of the *Ori-Oke*.

Thirdly, unlike the time of Moses when the Israelite society had less issues to struggle with, the contemporary Nigerian society is very complex with diverse issues and challenges confronting the people. The challenges, for which people are desperately seeking solutions, are marital, family, financial and spiritual, among others. The current situation of hardship has made several individuals, who ordinarily find it difficult to attend church service in the town attend *Ori- Oke* for solutions to their chronic problems. Thus *Ori-Oke* is open to all: Christians, Muslims and traditional worshippers.

Finally, and as earlier discussed, *Ori-Oke* has economic benefits to both the worshippers and founders/pastors/prophets of the *Ori-Oke*. For the worshippers, getting permanent solution to their economic crisis and family problems are the most pressing needs in their scale of preference, hence, they seek for spiritual solution on *Ori-Oke*. As for the founders, as well as pastors and prophets attached to *Ori-Oke,* getting spiritual solution to the challenges of worshippers is their most pressing need in their scale of preference. When this is achieved, two things will happen: one, they will have a sense of fulfilment in their ministerial assignments. Secondly, they will be economically empowered by the worshippers, whose problems have been solved as the worshippers appreciate them with financial gifts, which in turn, help them to purchase the most pressing needs in their own personal scale of preference.

In conclusion, founders, pastors, prophets, and prophetesses who are in charge of different *Ori-Oke,* especially in the Igbeti community, must continue to attend to the spiritual needs of the worshippers as this ministration has economic benefits to them, the worshippers and the whole community. Therefore, they must be led by the spirit of the Lord in all they do on *Ori-Oke,* as they assist spiritually all the worshippers that come. They must not be seen to complicate matters for the worshippers. Rather, they must be agents through which people can worship God and receive instruction from Him. With this, the desired social change and transformation in contemporary Africa will be realized.

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Chapter 11

African Religious Philosophy: A Study of *Ori-Oke* in the Ontology of the *Aladura* Churches of Nigeria

Olaleye Oyindamola Gospel

Abstract

African Traditional Religion has been in existence since ancient times. This religion has been driven by African philosophy over the ages. This philosophy is deeply rooted in their cosmology, myth and attitudinal perception to issues of life, which are expressed through the vehicles of oral tradition and sacred institutions. The African Indigenous Churches, popularly known as the Aladura Church movement, have upheld the beliefs in sacred places, such as the mountain from their African Traditional Religious consciousness. Historically, the movement was recorded to have emerged out of the quest for indigenization of African Christian religious practice. The Aladura Churches perceive Ori-Oke as that which is not only an elevated place, as it is literally implied, but a sacred place where they can be closer to God, and where their prayers can be efficacious. Findings have shown that the Aladura perception of Ori-Oke have tremendously influenced African Christian spirituality. Hence, most Christians nowadays perceive Ori-Oke as sacred places to spiritually tackle issues of life. This paper looks at the Aladura Churches' perspectives towards Ori-Oke, and how they affect other Christian thought patterns on the concept of Ori-Oke. This paper adopts historical, philosophical and qualitative methods. The work concludes that the philosophy behind Ori-Oke ideology by members of the Aladura Churches is stems from their African religious worldview.

Introduction

Africans, before the advent of Christianity and Islam (the new religious movement in Africa), tackled central philosophical issues from a religious point of view. Most answers to most questions in philosophy, therefore, have religious undertones in Africa. This

implies that the role of religion in African philosophical discourses cannot be undermined. Religion and philosophy were so intertwined that African religion was seen to be the gateway to African philosophy (Makumba, 2005).

Mbiti (1990), in his work *African Religion and Philosophy*, noted that Africans are 'notoriously religious.' The religion has such a grip on their entire life that it is not always easy to isolate. Hence, an understanding of the people and their perspectives about the physical phenomenon requires knowledge of their religion. Religion, therefore, occupies a special place in African ontology, for it defines the world of African men and women. The reason behind Mbiti's position, that there are no irreligious people in traditional African society, could be in support of Makumba (2005) that:

1. Religion belongs to the community and every African must belong to a community.
2. African traditional religions are everywhere in the life of community.

The philosophy of Africans about the physical world is embedded in their indigenous religion. Africans, for those reasons, see every physical entity and place as sacred. High reverence is given to physical entities such as mountains, which are the focus of this paper, and they hold strong the belief in the ultimate being, often regarded as the Supreme Being, *Olorun* or *Olodumare*. The Supreme Being is at the apex of the African ontological structure, and can only be accessed through deities, the smaller gods. They believe that there are gods attached to all physical entities and places they regard as sacred.

However, with the emergence of Christian missionaries, African Traditional Religion began to decline, and the religion was seen as barbaric and fetish. As a result, high reverence given to the objects and places regarded as sacred decreased. This led to the quest for reconstruction of African identity and philosophy among the African indigenous Church leaders, especially the Yoruba. They were not comfortable with the main line churches' styles of worshiping God,

because it imposed on them European customs and traditions. So, in a bid to correct the foreignness of the churches, they took into consideration the African culture and religious consciousness. They held that by these, they were breeding their own kind of African church, where African institutions would be recognized and respected. They felt that any institution which did not meet the Africans' daily life experience would create spiritual hunger. In the African Indigenous Churches, popularly known as *Aladura*, liturgy was made more African, as they made use of dreams, singing, drumming and dancing, some of which are the ingredients of African cultural manifestations (Aiyegboyin & Ishola). The *Aladura* churches combined two fundamental elements of Christianity and African culture in a way that advertised their Christian intentions without undermining their African credentials. They emphasized features which are relevant and valued by the African people, such as prophecy, healing, prayer, vision, dream and the use of sacred objects (Adelumo, 1979). The *Aladura* Churches see *Ori-Oke* as sacred places, where they can easily access or worship God. *Ori-Oke*, symbolically to them is the highest point, closer to the heaven or the underworld. In short, in the *Aladura* churches of Nigeria, *Ori-Oke* (Mountain tops/prayer) are given a high spiritual connotation, and this connotation has a lot to do with the general African traditional religious philosophical activities.

African Traditional Religious Philosophy

Philosophy has been defined etymologically as the love of wisdom. It explains that philosophy 'has been variously defined as the handmaid of clarification, as the search for the ultimate meaning of a sentence, and it is also seen as consisting in critical thinking, reflection and analysis of concepts.' Philosophy tries to give analysis of various concepts, making sure that these concepts are used properly. As such, philosophy can be seen as conceptual analysis. African Philosophy refers to a comprehensive system of ideas about human nature, and the nature of the reality we live in (Izidory, 2014). In other words, philosophy is the study of general and fundamental

problems connected with reality, existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language.

Philosophy is distinguished from other ways of addressing life issues by its critical, systematic approach and its reliance on rational argument. African philosophy, therefore, refers to the understanding of altitude of the mind, logic, and the perceptions that guide how Africans think, act or speak about different situations of life. African philosophy is the philosophy which should be propounded by the person born in Africa. It should be written, spoken or done within the African continent, should reflect African mysteries, which concern themselves with the way of African living (Adelumo, 1979). Myth, beliefs and proverbs constitute the source of African philosophy. These are philosophy in nature, and they portray meaning in the African context.

In shaping the thought, perception, approach, feeling and history of the humankind, the role of religion cannot be undermined. Religion is expressed by a group of people with a common interest. African Traditional Religion is a type of religion expressed by a community of African people, who share common interests, beliefs, origins, cultures and traditions. J. Omosade Awolalu, in his work 'Sin and its Removal in African Traditional Religion' writes that when we speak of African Traditional Religion we mean the indigenous religion of the Africans. It is the religion that has been handed down from generation to generation by the forbears of the present generation of Africans. It is not a fossil religion, a thing of the past, but a religion that Africans today have made theirs, by living it and practising it. This is a religion that has no written literature, yet, it is 'written' everywhere for those who care to see and read. It is largely written in the peoples' myths and folktales, in their songs and dances, in their liturgies and shrines, and in their proverbs and pithy sayings. All of these, therefore, constitute the source of African philosophy. They are philosophy in nature, and they portray meaning in the African context.

Although the historical founder of African Traditional Religion is neither known nor worshiped (Izidory, 2014), the implication of social Anthropologist, Edward Smith's question, 'how can the

untutored African conceive God?' is not true. Africans, and Nigerians, have the concept of God. Africa is not bereft of religion, or the concept of God (Idowu, 1996). The history of religion in Africa is as old as Africa herself. The African worldview is purely philosophical and Africans are notoriously religious.

Since the African worldview is a religious one, it therefore, means that religion and religious practices are their waking thought. African traditional religious philosophy, in this context, is the African religious worldview, that is, the African view or perception of the world from the standpoint of religion. This religious philosophy had been handed down by forebears of yore and orally transmitted from one generation to another (Alamu, 2010). African traditional religious philosophy, though not written down, nor possessing sacred scriptures as of yet, is written in the memory of the very world in which we live, and transmitted orally as the occasion demands. African traditional religious philosophy does not have a drive for membership like Christianity and Islam. It is very tolerant. It accommodates and remains autonomous. Therefore, we are born into it; we live in it and die in it (Awolalu & Dopamu, 2005).

The religious philosophy of Africans is better understood in Dopamu's comment on the overview of African Indigenous Religion. Dopamu (2005) opined that:

> African Religion encompasses all aspects of life. Africa (Nigerian) does not know how to live without religion. They celebrate life religiously, and they never embark on anything without bringing in religion. Thus, at birth, marriage, death, warfare, healing, the foundation of any project, planting, harvesting, enthronement of chiefs and kings and other areas of human endeavour, African Traditional Religion plays an important role. This is why their entire culture is permeated with religious practices.

It is not a surprise that Mbiti (1990) has this to say about African culture intertwining with religion: 'Religion permeates into all the department of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it.'

African philosophy and religion are two sides of the same coin. This means that talking about African philosophy is talking about the religion of African people. It is clear that a study of African traditional religion is a study of the totality of the people's way of life. This, therefore, means that the philosophy of African Traditional Religion does exist in well-articulated peoples' philosophies of their daily activities, and this interweaves with the religion and culture of the Africans.

The philosophy of traditional African religion is viewed in different areas, through which its study and its peculiarity relies on five components/elements of African Traditional Religion, which are reflected in peoples' day to day activities (Izidory, 2014). The elements are sometimes called structures of African Traditional Religion. The elements of philosophical foundation of African traditional religion are the belief in God, in divinities, in spirits, in the ancestors and in the practice of magic and medicine. These elements are the philosophical pillars on which the study of African Traditional Religion rests. Apart from the study of the nature of the religions of Africa, the five elements form the central tenets of African religion and philosophy by reflecting peoples' myths, stories, proverbs, songs and all other cultural aspects of the descendants of African continent (Idowu, 1996).

African philosophy reflects the belief in God. The concept of the belief in God in Africa forms the bedrock of every religious worship and ceremony. It is an idea that is fundamental to African religion. Africans believe in the existence of a supreme primordial being, the Lord of the universe. He is the supreme primordial Being, the author and father of other gods. These gods serve as intermediaries between God and man. God is known in Africa by the names given to him; the names by which God is called in Africa are descriptive of his character, and the reality of his existence to Africans conveys, in clear terms, the religious and philosophical thinking and experience of the Africans. His attributes are seen in the names given to their children, such as Chidinma in Igbo meaning 'God is good,' Olorun Femi in Yoruba meaning 'God loves me' and Onyemachi meaning 'Who knows God?,' depicting God's unknowability (Izidory, 2014).

Another method for studying this religion and philosophy of Africa is through songs. Songs are so dynamic in Africa that they enrich her heritage. These songs are employed in worship, naming ceremonies, weddings, funerals, when wrestling, during farm cultivation, while working, going to war, praising the ruler, rocking babies to sleep, and many other activities. They express joy, sorrow, assurances, hopes and fears of the future and life after death. In these songs, the peoples' religious and philosophical outlook are expressed through sacrifices and offerings in the traditional religion. Some of the many ways Africans worship the Supreme Being is through sacrifices and offerings. They are important elements of worship, and are the essence of every religion. Mbiti (1990) postulates that the practice of making sacrifices and offerings is found all over Africa. Sacrifices involve the shedding of the blood of human beings, animals or birds, while offerings do not involve blood, but concern the giving of all other things, such as foodstuffs, water, milk, honey or money. Sacrifice to African object of worship is done during the occurrence of drought, epidemics, war, raids, calamity, insect pests and destructive floods. Singing and dancing in worship is embedded into African philosophy and religion. God is often worshipped through songs and dance, and African people are very fond of singing. Many of religious gatherings and ceremonies are accompanied with singing, which not only helps to pass on religious knowledge from one person or group to another, but also helps to create and strengthen corporal feeling, identity and solidarity.

Some of the songs are used to pacify or hush babies and to mark the birth, initiation, marriage or death of a person. Through music, singing and dancing are accompanied with clapping of hands and beating of drums. People are able to participate emotionally and physically in the act of worship. The music and dancing penetrate into the very being of the worshipping individuals. Afterwards people feel satisfied in the spirit (Mbiti, 1990).

African religion is an organized philosophy. There is a hierarchical order of being in African ontological structure. Africa places high reverence on the Supreme Being, who cannot be seen nor accessed directly, except through other smaller gods, which are often

regarded as deities among the Yoruba. The African view of physical entities like hills and mountains, which are the focus of this paper, is notoriously spiritual. Africans construe them as sacred entities in which they believe that there is a god attached who must be worship in order to access the Supreme Being, *Olodumare*. Consequently, the belief in sacredness of virtually every physical entity in the world implies that Africans are indeed spiritual, and their philosophical reflection of the world around them is based on spirituality.

Unfortunately, African Traditional Religion has suffered a great setback at the hand of Christianity and Islam in the wake of their incursions. The new religious movements condemned African Religion as devil worship, pagan worship, animism, fetishism, among others. As a result, a handful of people have left the religion, especially those who have access to a western style of life and embrace, either Islam or Christianity (Alamu, 2014: 366). The eclipse of the religion however, does not mean a total demise. In fact, indigenous religion, according to Dopamu (2006), has made a comeback in this global age. Some of the elements of African traditional religious worldview can still be found in the new religious movements, especially in Christianity through the spirituality of African Indigenous Churches, popularly known as the *Aladura* Churches, who have embraced African religious philosophy with their Christian faith.

Aladura Churches of Nigeria

The most popular among the African Initiated Churches (AICs) today is the *Aladura* Church movement. It has the largest number of followers on the continent. The population of its followers is estimated to be about forty million. It is the largest congregation of indigenous churches in Africa. Most of the churches known under this umbrella-name manage their own affairs and are independent of each other. Most of the indigenous churches of West Africa belong to the *Aladura* group of Churches (Ositelu, 2002).

Although it is difficult to say exactly when the word *Aladura* first came into use, the word *Aladura* is from the Yoruba language

meaning 'those who pray.' However, this word is used across the Nigerian boundary, through all West African countries where indigenous churches are faring well within the society (Ositelu, 2002). The formative period of *Aladura* Christianity in Nigeria was that of association, dissociation and split. These characteristics first manifested when it transformed itself from a nameless group of prayer warriors within a parent church, the Saint Saviour Anglican church, to the Precious Stone Society (PSS). The PSS later associated with a North American Pentecostal group, the Faith Tabernacle (FT), and The Apostolic Church (TAC) of Great Britain. The Apostolic Church of Great Britain, subsequently metamorphosed into Nigerian Apostolic Church (NAC), then United Apostolic Church (UAC) and finally Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) (Ayegboyin & Ishola, 2013). The Christ Apostolic Church emerged first as the 'Faith Tabernacle' and as the 'Apostolic Church' in 1918 and 1930, respectively.

In July 1941, Akinyele, Babalola and Odubanjo organised themselves and their followers into the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC). That step set these men apart from the Apostolic Church, with which they had been associated, for the Apostolic Church, directed by English Missionaries, would not stop using modern medicines as the CAC insisted (Oshun, 1983). The Cherubim and Seraphim Church came to the historical limelight in 1925 (Omoyajowo, 1982). Celestial Church of Christ came into light around 1950 (Olupona, 1987). According to recent findings, the most equipped and well organized among the *Aladura* Churches was formally established on the 27th of July, 1930. The name 'The Church of the Lord (Aladura)' was assigned to the organization during the solemn period of the Feast of the Holy Trinity, on the 19th of August, 1928.

The Church of the Lord Aladura started with open-air services on the 9th of June, 1929. A small group of believers were then worshiping Jehovah God together (Ositelu, 2002).

According to H. W. Turner, the Church of the Lord *Aladura* began around 1930. But as we can see above, the Church started to operate around 1925 and was formerly established in 1930. Prophet Josiah Ositelu received the mandate through various visions and

revelations from God, which he documented in the period between June and November of the year 1925 (Tuner, 1967):

> Your prayers are heard. After many afflictions I will uplift you. Be not afraid, I am with you (20th June 1925).
>
> I will anoint you as my prophet, even as Elijah anointed Elisha in the olden days, so it shall be unto you (18th August, 1925).
>
> Gradually the seals of power will come to you. Your good time draws on space (18th September 1925).
>
> The Lord will give you strong constitution, and people will be streaming after you (24th September 1925).
>
> Thou shalt teach the Oyo students and those that are beyond the seas (10th October1925).
>
> The elders will hold council to change your heart, but you will prevail (4th November1925).
>
> I will build New Jerusalem in you. You are the one whom Jesus Christ has sent like the last Elijah to repair the Lord's road, and make his way straight (5th November 1925).
>
> I will give you the key of power like Moses, and will bless you like Job (15th November 1925).

In an interview with Daniel O. Otakoya, on the 26th June, 2011, in Agbowo, Ibadan, Otakoya held that the work of the Holy Spirit is the pillar behind the evangelism and proliferation of *Aladura* churches. But this is not unconnected to the importance of social mobility, considering the fact that establishment of churches cannot occur while the holy spirited individuals stay in a place. The churches at the onset, due to inadequate funding, relied much on the self-sacrifice of members, who were willing to take the churches' faith-traditions to their respective abodes (Otakoya, 2011). Within a few years of existence, most especially, between 1920s and 1960s, the *Aladura* Churches grew phenomenally in the nooks and crannies of Yorubaland and beyond. Different scientific and technological strategies of preaching the gospel were introduced in Nigeria.

Ori-Oke Ontology among the *Aladura* Churches of Nigeria

In order to aid spiritual exercises, the *Aladura* Churches developed preference for the use of *Ori-Oke* as a sacred place. They use *Ori-Oke* for the purpose of prayer, or as a sort of spiritual retreat. It is believed that prayers offered at *Ori-Oke* are always efficacious. *Ori-Oke* which is literally translated as mountain top is an elevated, high place. *Ori-Oke* is owned by individuals and groups who claimed to have received divine instructions in that regard *Ori-Oke*, within African Christianity, is an enactment of a sacred space on a mountain top. It is characterized by various prayer regimes, exorcism, ritual and religious practices for the purpose of seeking divine help from God concerning issues of life. The use of the sacred sites, particularly among the *Aladura* Churches has gradually made some of these *Ori-Oke* centres of popular visitation. In Nigeria, *Ori-Oke* are named after the towns in which they are located (Baiyewu, 2011). O*ri-Oke* Erinmo is a mountain top named after the town in which it is located, in Erinmo near Ilesha. Others include O*ri-Oke* Sobi near Ilorin, *Ori- Oke* Agelu near Iseyin, *Ori-Oke* Iragbiji near Osogbo, *Ori-Oke* Iragberi near Ejigbo and Ilobu and *Ori-Oke* Horeb in Kaduna.

Mount Horeb in Kaduna has been relocated as a result of religious crisis in Northern Nigeria. It was relocated to a place that members claimed that God revealed to the spiritual father of the organization, Samuel Adefila Abidoye. Mount Horeb is currently located at Orile Igbon, about 24 kilometres away from Ilorin. Orile Igbon is a small town situated between Eyenkorin and Ogbomosho. The church had its maiden worship at the new Mount Horeb, Orile Igbon on May 25th, 2011 (Baiyewu, 2011).

There also is *Ori-Oke Olorunkole*. It is a sacred hill top in Ibadan. The sacred hill top took its name from its natural cave-like shape. It has two parts: one part has the cave from which the sacred space derived its name. It is a house, which God has built *Olorun ko ile*, (God built a house). The cave is deep and its length has not been estimated. The other part is a selected place where most spiritual leaders meet to address crucial needs of their clients. *Olorunkole* hill is regarded by devotees, who converge there as a located space of power where

people commune with God without domestic or industrial disturbances (Baiyewu, 2011). According to Van der Leeuw (1986), such a natural place not built with hands, but 'hollowed out into such spaciousness by natural causes' will make one feel the divine presence. 'Your soul will be deeply moved by an inkling, and a presage of the divine.' Such location remains sacred and retains its power if humans have not reduced it to a location 'deprived of its power.' Abidoye, when interviewed on the 15th May, 2011, said that *Ori-Oke Olorunkole,* which is located close to the University of Ibadan, has, for many decades, played host to lots of '*Aladura* men of power' and solution seekers across religious boundaries.

Also in an interview with O. Bayewu, on the 17th May, 2012, at Sango, he noted that, in the past, there was always an annual event where charismatic men and women, the rich, average and the poor in Ibadan, and other parts of Nigeria, climbed up the hills for special prayers that lasted around three to seven days. Close to the date of the annual worship on the sacred hill, prophets inform their regular and casual clients to meet them on the hill top, where prophets jointly engage in spiritual warfare against wicked forces that are militating against their clients. *Olorunkole* hill-top is also a place where prophets test both their divine gifts and acquired spiritual powers and where they harness and declare the intervention of unseen powers in people's problems.

There are self-proclaimed prophets, who do not own a church, but who have made the *Ori-Oke* a mountain of prayer, and a church, where they usually attend to clients who believe strongly in their charismatic power. There are also those who claim to have received the call to construct, or use a sacred hill top *Ori-Oke* (Baiyewu, 2011).

Ori-Oke, in the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), does not only imply the physical use of a hill top as a sacred space for special prayers. *Ori -Oke* in the CCC implies a 'spiritual elevation within the physical space.' It is used to explain the spiritual state of a person in trance. The individual, though physically present in the terrestrial world, is spiritually present in the celestial world. While in the spiritual state, he/she abstains from food and drinks, fasting and praying, interceding for members and non-members, revealing

information hidden from ordinary persons and revealing ritual recipes for combating existential problems (Baiyewu, 2011).

The goal of *Aladura* churches is to bring people from their unbelief to Christ and to heal the sick through prayer. This has constantly been the benchmark for *Aladura*'s self-assessment of where their brand of Christianity was, to where it currently is, in the committee of churches, where it has spread to, where it is yet to spread to and how to take it to places where its presence has not been registered (Tuner, 1967). Hence, one major reason for the use of *Ori-Oke* by the *Aladura* Churches is to pray. The belief in the power of prayer is a prominent feature of this movement. Africans in general believe in the efficacy of prayer. This group prepares prayer booklets and techniques of prayer, and each member is instructed to pray every three hours, day and night. Midnight prayers are believed to be more effective. This belief in the power of prayer is one of the major reasons that prompted *Aladura* churches to believe in *Ori-Oke* as sacred places where they can pray without disturbance and where members' spirits are lifted high from the ground, closer to God. The *Aladura* sees praying on *Ori-Oke* as a method of struggling and wrestling to receive quick answer to their prayers. This prayer most often is often accompanied with fasting and other sacrifice, especially when it comes to praying about the issues of life that seem to be like mountains, problems or challenges, higher than them. In Turner's view, it is a 'special form of the wider concept of strenuous endeavour, which emphasizes the earnestness, frequency, and the importunity of prayer.' *Adejobi* in Turner explained the reasons behind this in the following words:

> If we are tired of praying then we shall resort to human means of protection, namely paganism. But 'God will never be tired to hear and to render your request to you' (1967)

The pattern of the *Aladura* Churches prayer is adoration, confession, intercessions, petitions and thanksgiving. The Aladura churches go to *Ori-Oke* to pray for healing, deliverance from sickness or bondage, or for the gift of children, promotion, business

prosperity or examination success, just like going to Orissa cults in the African Traditional Religion. Petitions are also made in form of special psalms and the recitation of holy names while praying on *Ori-Oke*. Recited is a psalm like psalm 121: 1-2

> I lift up my eyes to the mountains-
> where does my help come from?
> My help comes from the Lord,
> the Maker of heaven and earth. (NIV)

According to Ray, 'this accords with the traditional idea that ritual language and sacred praise names have an intrinsic power of their own' (Tuner, 1967: 71).

Conclusion

The Africans believe in sacred entities like hills because of their belief in the presence of a Divine Being. This belief has no doubt influenced the *Aladura* Churches. Hence, the act of setting apart specific place like *Ori-Oke* by the *Aladura* Churches for spiritual exercise has become a dominant religious activity by African Christians. *Ori-Oke* (mountain prayer) have become vital points where there is a convergence of quick intervention to tackle spirituality with physicality. For this reason, the use of *Ori-Oke* to pray, in recent times, has gained more momentum among Christians in Africa. They believe that those who go to the mountains come back changed and empowered. They come back ready to work for God's vision, and to make that vision a reality. They also believe that those who go to the mountain do not remain the same, as it is a place to alter one's *Ori* (Destiny), especially if one believes that he has a bad one. This paper, therefore, raises another religious and philosophical issue: the concept of *Ori* and its alteration from the African Christian religious philosophy.

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Chapter 12

Significance of Mountain Prayer in Biblical Narrative with Reference to Matt. 17: 1-5

M. O. Oyetade

Abstract

Mountains and hills were particular places of interest in Israel. Due to their durability, height, and make-up, they often became natural places for refuge and security, territorial boundaries and strategic military locations. Mountains have a significant symbolic value in the Bible; they, first and foremost, are part of the physical reality of the Bible. As a result, mountains and hills are mentioned over 500 times in the Bible. Mountains have a logical religious symbolism for biblical cultures, since they are 'closer to God' who is believed to dwell in the heavens. Every day on the news, we hear about people in desperate need: victims of war, disease, crime, poverty and those with family and personal problems. For God's people to rely on His strength, they answer to the call for mountain prayer. In the light of this observation, the objective of this paper is to unearth the significance of the Lord going into a mountain to pray and to find out if the Lord hears us better from the mountain top than elsewhere. To achieve the set goal, the author used both exegetical, historical and sociological methods. Data were gathered through primary sources, (the Bible) and secondary sources, in which related books and journals were consulted. The paper discovered that mountains are sites of transcendent spiritual experiences and encounters with God or the appearances of God. They are places of special worship and meetings with God, since they provided seclusion that is free from interruption, and fitted with impressiveness and grandeur to raise the thoughts to the God that had formed the high hills and the deep-shaded groves. In conclusion, though the transfiguration itself instructs us about the true nature of Jesus, it also gives us a glimpse of what is yet to be, not only of His appearance in heaven, but our glorification as well.

Introduction

The phenomenon of prayer is a universal phenomenon that can be found in all human societies and religions. In Christianity, for example, prayer plays an important role in a Christian's life: it is both an offensive and defensive weapon for humans. In other words, he looks unto God for help to fight the enemy through prayer. Human beings by nature are spiritual beings, and it is this spiritual nature that flames their desire to provide answers to certain metaphysical questions of living. Hamman (2012) corroborates this position by saying that, in prayer, we connect ourselves to God and seek a deeper and more meaningful purpose for our lives. Some of the urgent needs of life make Christians pray to God, because He has the ultimate power. Yokes are broken through prayers, people experienced breakthroughs in their marriages, carriers, and academics through the power of prayer. Again, because of economic recession, political crisis, higher level of crime, poverty and child trafficking in the society, people pray much more than ever before. They do not limit their prayers to church alone, they go to hills and mountains to answer the calls to pray.

As an element of religious belief, prayer cannot be separated from the faith of man. According to Ebojah (2011) prayer strengthens the believer, builds up his courage and his confidence in the ability of God to do the impossible**.** Certain Hebrew words further strengthen the need to pray, such as *Sa'al,* which means to ask, require, wish, desire or request for oneself (Deut 10: 12, Judges 5: 25, Job 31: 30). Another Hebrew term is *erunao* which means to consult, seek or counsel. *Hanan* in Hebrew means to beg for favour (Eerdmans, 2002, p.227). Other words are *rinn^ah***,** a cry of lamentation, a prayer of lament (*Pst.* 17: 16, 106: 44) and *sawah*, a cry for help (*Pst.* 34: 17). It is used only for supplication and calling upon God in prayer, often standing alongside *Proseuche* prayer (Luke 8: 38, Jer. 11: 14; Brown, 1998). Adewunmi (2010) asserts that prayer will ever remain God's given spiritual weapon in the hand of every godly man to solve all manner of earthly problems. Pratt (1987) opines that prayer is the believer's communication with God; this definition suggests three

main elements of prayer: God, the believer and the communication. If one of these components is missing, prayer cannot occur. Without God, no one listens, without the believer no one speaks and without communication, nothing is said.

Against this backdrop, mountains have been singled out for mention several hundred times in the Scriptures. Due to their durability, height, and make-up, they often become natural places for refuge and security, territorial boundaries, and strategic military locations. Mountains can serve as places of revelation (Rev. 2: 9-10) or places that carry the sense of God's presence for special worship and meetings with God. God uses imagery of mountains and valleys often in His Word, to describe His power, the high moments of success in life and obstacles that stand in our way. It is not surprising, therefore, that mountains occupied an important place in Jesus' earthly ministry. Jesus instructed his disciples, 'on a mountainside' (Matt. 5: 1). On one occasion, having gone up a mountainside and having sat down with his disciples, Jesus fed 5,000 people (John 6: 3). Mountains comprised a special refuge for Jesus to spend time alone with his heavenly Father in prayer (Matt. 6: 45-46; Luke 6: 12; John 6: 15). People go to mountain prayer to avoid distraction. It is like being alone with God. Jesus Christ took three of his disciples to the mountain during the transfiguration, and he taught and prayed with them there. Moses communicated with God on the mountain where he received the Ten Commandments. The objective of the paper is to find out what makes a mountain a place of prayer. What biblical reference supports such practice? We will further examine what takes place in mountains prayer, as well as the significance of mountain prayer to the 21st century Christians in Nigeria.

Background to Matthew 17

The amazing dramatic account of the transfiguration of Christ on the mountain in Matt. 17 marks a major turning point in the gospel narrative, for Jesus was beginning to turn more and more towards Jerusalem and the suffering and death that awaited Him. But before all of that would take place, there was this glimpse of glory.

Interestingly we read in the New Testament that the glory that was set before Him motivated Him to endure the cross. The revelation of Christ's glory in this chapter was a clear confirmation to the disciples of the truth of Peter's confession of faith (Matt.16: 16). However, it was also great encouragement for Christ Himself, as He faced the agony that would occur on another hill called Golgotha. We may divide the passage into three major parts for our analysis. First, we have the record of the event of the transfiguration (verses 1-3). Second, we have Peter's suggestion and the divine response to it (verses 4-8). Third, we have the instruction by Jesus and the question by the disciples (verses 9-13) (McClister 2017).

The record of the event certainly is the basis and key to the entire passage. The record simply reports what happened without going into as much detail as the other narratives. But in the other two sections, we have the all-important dialogue. In the second part, we have Peter's suggestion, followed by the voice from heaven. This revelation struck terror in the disciples, but that fear was relieved by the Jesus' words of comfort. Between Peter's suggestion, the voice from heaven and Jesus' words, there are three 'speeches' in the second part to be considered. Then, the third section, which is the aftermath of the event, also has three 'speeches': an instruction, followed by a question and an answer. What is interesting is that in the event, Jesus does not explain the transfiguration at all. The voice from heaven explains who Jesus is, but not why Moses or Elijah are there on the mountain. We are left with a number of questions, as indeed the disciples must have been left as well (McClister, 2017).

Exegesis of Matt. 17: 1-5

Ὄ ρ ο ς (Mountain) *in* Heb ha ̂ra ̂r. This means in the singular a 'mountain.' To some people, according to Bermbaun (2006), the mountain is believed to be a very sacred place, visited by the people to seek the face of the Supernatural. It is observed that not only Christians visit the Prayer Mountain, but non-Christians, who feel the need to seek God to find spiritual solutions to their problems, also visit the Prayer Mountain. Mountains are frequently

associated with Yahweh's presence and with a sense of God's nearness. Isaac was to be offered on a mountain (Gen.22: 2); during the battle with the Amalekites, Moses prayed on top of hill (Exod.17: 9-10); Elijah climbs to the top of Mount Carmel to pray (1 Kings 18: 42; Jos. Ant., 8, 344); the circumcision of the Israelites takes place on the hill Haaraloth (Josh 5: 3); the ark is set on a hill (1 Sam 7: 1; 2 Sam 6: 3); a hill is the high-place of sacrifice for the Israelites in Canaan, the oldest cultic site and Samuel offers there (1 Sam 9: 12ff.19,25) (Verbrugge, 2000, p.536). According to The UBS (1997), in Jewish thought, a high mountain was a suitable place for a divine revelation (see Matt 4: 8; 5: 1; 28: 16).

The UBS (1997) further adds that the striking natural phenomenon of the mountain has attracted attention and awakened religious concepts, in all ages and among all peoples. First, the power of the mountain has caused it to be honoured as divine, along with rivers, springs, waterfalls and the earth. Second, mountains and high places are peopled with spirits. In lofty religions, the soaring up of the mountain has led to its being viewed as the abode of the gods, or to the cultic worship of higher beings on its peaks. 'Above' and 'below' in their symbolical content are not interchangeable in religion and mythology. In the words of Donaldson (1987), in the Matthean perspective, it is when Jesus is 'on the mountain' that his significance and the nature of his mission are most clearly seen. Consequently, it can be said that mountains in the book of Matthew, function not primarily as places of revelation or isolation, but as eschatological sites, where Jesus enters into the full authority of his Sonship.

Μ ε τ ε μ ο ρ φ ω θ η **or transfigured**

This word, predominantly middle or passive, when active means 'to change into another form.' The change may be an external one a change of state, or an inner change. This term *Μ ε τ α μ ο ρ φ ό ω,* to transform, literally or figuratively 'metamorphose' means to change, transfigure or transform. The word refers to an inward spiritual change. The transformation touched the inner man, the form and the nature. Christ changed from humiliation to the glory of

His Deity. Jesus took on the form of His heavenly glory and was transformed. It was a change in appearance, and does not denote the change of the substance of a thing (Barker, 1994). It occurs four times in the NT (Matt. 17: 2; Mk.9: 2; Rom.12: 2 and 2 Cor.3: 18). In Matt.17: 2 and Mk.9: 2 *Μ ε τ α μ ο ρ φ ό ω*, describes the transfiguration of Christ's features and clothing during his transfiguration. Matt.17: 2 uses the imagery of the shining sun to express the transfigured radiance of Jesus' face. In Jesus' transfiguration, his clothing was also rendered brilliant: 'white as the light' (Matt.17: 2), 'more dazzling than bleached cloth' (Mk.9: 3) and 'bright as a flash of lightning' (Lk.9: 29). This experience is called a *ὁ ρ α μ α horamá*, sight or vision (Matt.17: 9), a word that denotes a thing of supernatural quality that becomes observable (cf. Acts 7: 31; 9: 10, 12; 10: 3, 17, 19). The meaning of the transfiguration is to be found in the biblical context. The imagery is that of Daniel 7: 13-14. This point of reference does not exhaust the meaning, however. For not only are there messianic motifs, but the imagery of the exodus is also prominent (Verbrugge, 2000,). As Vine (1985) observes:

> The Transfiguration is one of the only two places that "heaven" speaks directly about Jesus . . . No other event in the Gospels involves the presence of luminaries of the past. The visible glorification of Jesus is also unique. Even in His resurrection appearances, He is not described as bearing the brilliance He does here.

At the transfiguration of Jesus, we see the *Shekinah* in the face of Jesus. The incarnate God made Himself visible. It is the undiluted glory of deity dwelling in Christ made manifest. 'We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten Son from the Father' (John 1: 14b). Morris (2005) says, 'Jesus underwent a unique transformation before the disciples.' It was an unusual radiance with even His clothes becoming splendid in appearance. 'Even before His most intimate disciples the human appearance of Jesus was for a moment changed into that of a heavenly being in the transfigured world,' writes J. Behm. Robertson (2006) adds,

The purpose of the Transfiguration was to strengthen the heart of Jesus as He was praying long about His approaching death, and to give these chosen three disciples a glimpse of His glory against the hours of darkness coming. No one on earth understood the heart of Jesus, and so Moses and Elijah came. The poor disciples utterly failed to grasp the significance of it all.

The important truth of the Transfiguration is the authentication of the Son as the Messiah, by means of the voice that spoke to the disciples out of the *Shekinah* cloud. Jesus may be rejected by men, but He is accepted by His Father. 'While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"' (Matthew 17: 5).

ω φ θ η **(There appeared)**

This term is a singular aorist passive verb with Moses (to be understood also with Elijah), but the participle σ υ λ λ α λ ο υ ν τ ε ς is plural agreeing with both. In the words of Tenney (1973), it is from the verb ὁ ρ ά ω which means to look, see, experience, perceive, take note, see, take care or vision. The main Hebrew original for the verb is *râ'eh,* seeing. Generally it means to see with one's own eyes, becoming aware (Gen. 27: 1). Figuratively, it can denote to perceive intellectually or spiritually, or become conscious etc. (Psal.34: 8). 'Seeing' in the Old Testament can also refer to perception by means of other senses, for example, 'hearing' (Jer.33: 24) or 'understanding' (1 Sam.12: 17). In the word of Verbrugge (2000), in the New Testament, the meaning also remains the same. It further means a vision of the spirit or intellect (Lk.2: 30) or seeing salvation (Acts 2: 17; 26: 16). 'Sufficient objectivity is guaranteed by the vision being enjoyed by all the three.' The Jewish apocalypses reveal popular expectations that Moses and Elijah will reappear. Both have mystery connected with their deaths. One represented law, the other prophecy, while Jesus represented the gospel (grace). On the mountain they spoke of his demise (Luke 9: 31), the cross, the theme

uppermost in the mind of Christ, which the disciples did not comprehend. Jesus needed comfort and he gets it from fellowship with Moses and Elijah **(**Robertson, 2006).

Ο**ὗ**τος ἐστιν ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός **(This is my beloved Son).**

It was one thing to see Jesus transfigured, with His clothing and His appearance brighter than the sun—that was frightening to the disciples, as the other gospels tell us. But it was quite another thing to hear a voice from heaven confirming that Jesus was the Son of God. Peter had just made that confession, but now Peter heard it in a new light. The Christ, the Messiah (in Hebrew), was not merely a son of David and therefore designated 'Son of God'; He was God's Son in a unique way. God (the Father, we know) declared, 'This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him.' Barker (1994) opines that the word from heaven made three clear points: Jesus is the Son of God; Jesus is loved by the Father and pleasing to the Father; and Jesus must be obeyed. All of these ideas were being challenged by the religious leaders of the day and questioned by the people. The disciples, however, knew Jesus was God's Son (in some way), that He was doing the will of the Father and that He was to be obeyed. Now, this direct revelation confirmed their faith, and it surely encouraged Jesus, as well, as opposition had begun to mount and would increase.

According to McClister (2017) the word from heaven meant, first, a lesson for the disciples about who Jesus was. It showed Peter, James and John that Jesus was no ordinary man, nor even a great prophet, but that he was indeed no less than the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel. God was confirming the disciples' confession. Second, this scene demanded that men regard Jesus as one with the authority to speak to them. The transfiguration was a statement on the authority of Jesus. On that mountain, it was demonstrated that it is Jesus alone who has authority over men. Moses and Elijah served only a temporary purpose in the plan of God (Rom. 3: 21). Third, the transfiguration confirmed that the kingdom of the Messiah would be

characterized by glory. In the transfiguration, the three selected disciples saw a foreshadowing of the glory and victory of Jesus. Fourth, this scene is the key to understanding the cross of Jesus and his commitment to it. Here, Matthew shows us that the transfiguration was meant to be interpreted in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus. References to Jesus' death literally surround the transfiguration story (Matt.16: 21; 17: 12, 22).

Significance of Mountains Prayer

Hebrews 12: 22-24 states:

> But you have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels; verse 23: to the general assembly and church of the firstborn [who are] registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect; verse 24: to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than [that of] Abel (NKJV).

In the light of the above biblical text and the discovery from the study of mountain prayer, this researcher observes the significance of mountain prayer below:

Solution Centre

The Prayer Mountain is a place that is believed to offer spiritual encounters and a good environment for communication with God. Corroborating this, Ayegboyin (2010) submits that in order to aid spiritual exercises, the *Aladura* developed preference for the use of what they have termed as *ilemimo* or *Ori-Oke* (sacred places), which they use for the purposes of prayer or as a sort of spiritual retreat. It is believed that prayer when offered in these sacred places is always efficacious. People who go to the mountain have the positive belief that when faced with difficult or insurmountable situations in day-to-day life, like the loss of a valuable thing or person, an incurable illness,

a major financial problem, among others, they can go to the mountain to pray and their prayers are answered by God. The quest to find solutions to every problem in life has increased over the years, and so too has the urge to travel miles and climb mountains anticipating solutions to problems. Prophet Alo (2017), the coordinator of the CAC, *Ori-Oke* Eyebiokin, Oshogbo, states that 'the practice of praying on mountains has its origin in the Bible, and it offers many spiritual benefits for those who understand the importance.'

An Undistracted Experience

Praying on mountains helps a person to focus, unlike what is obtained when there is a crowd. One withdraws oneself from the busy life of the society, to a solitude and quiet place, to seek the face of the Supreme God, concerning some important personal, family or national issues. Akande (2017) said that a mountain prayer is a place of holiness. A mountain or hill is a traditional place to pray, since it provides seclusion that is retired, free from interruption, and fitted by impressiveness and grandeur to raise thoughts to the God that has formed the high hills and the deep-shaded groves. Its elevation gives the person praying a special sense of nearness to God. Prayer Mountains are places people can go to detach themselves from others, so that they can concentrate on their communication with God, in order to experience His grace without distraction. Mountains Prayer offer spiritual sanctuary for their occupants, and provide an almost direct link with God in the spirit.

Divine Experience

Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger (1973) claim that mountains can serve as places of revelation (Rev. 2: 9-10) or places that carry a sense of God's presence, to serve as places of special worship and meetings with God. Indeed, 'almost from the beginning of the Bible, mountains are sites of transcendent spiritual experiences, encounters with God or appearances by God.' Thus God instructed Abraham,

'take your son—your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah! Offer him up there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will indicate to you' (Gen 22: 2).

Mountains are also associated with God's power

Many have had their faith boosted by visiting these prayer places, because the more you pray, the more your spiritual eyes and ears open. Hence, you can see the unseen and hear the unheard at these prayer places. Problems and misfortunes vanish into thin air; blessings and spiritual gifts fall into open palms that are accepting and appreciating. Jesus could not have carried out his world-transforming ministry without a profound lifestyle of communion with God. Hence, Osungade (2017) is of the opinion that mountain prayer helps man to be in a place of His presence, encounter, and transformation, where people experience God, encounter His love and power, uncover their truest identities, learn to live supernaturally, and are empowered to fulfil their highest calling. A mountain top experience is a very sacrificing experience, but somehow, our generation has been convinced otherwise, and has come to believe that prayer is about the blessings we can receive alone. It is about praying, 'yet not my will but Yours be done.'

Unity in Diversity

Prayer Mountains not only provide a good environment for spiritual communication, they also have helped boost religious unity, because of their multi-religious nature. People from various religious affiliations converge on a mountain to pray, and this has helped in boosting unity, friendship and interpersonal relationships among different religious denominations.

Conclusion

This paper had discovered the dynamism of the concept of mountain prayer as it effected the divine encounter of the disciples

of Jesus on the Mountain of Transfiguration. As a result, several areas of application come to mind. First, the transfiguration itself instructs us about the true nature of Jesus. It also gives us a glimpse of what is yet to be, not only of His appearance in heaven, but our glorification as well. That is why Paul's instruction in Romans to be transformed is so important. Second, revelation demands a response. The natural instinct is fear and worship, falling on our faces before Him. But the practical continuation of our response comes at the divine instruction to listen to Jesus. If Jesus truly is the Lord of Glory, and not just a man from Galilee, then we must worship Him and obey Him. Third, God's revelation is given to us because God loves us, and desires that we be with Him in glory. The twelve apostles were human, just like us. They had their strengths and weaknesses. They made their share of mistakes. Each of them is different, showing us that there is no one God cannot use if he or she is willing. Since the paper has revealed to us that, through mountain prayer, God can be experienced in our personal and private closets, especially when we give our hearts to seeking Him, the church should avail herself of this opportunity by making good use of mountain prayer. At the same time, even though mountain prayer has a lot of blessings, it should not be seen as an end in itself, but a means to an end.

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Chapter 13

The *Ori-Oke* and the Attendees' Faith in Ilorin, Nigeria

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Abstract

Ori-Oke are places set aside for periodic prayer/worship that attracts worshippers across denominational boundaries, among Christians. Ori-Oke has become a common spiritual practice in Christendom. This paper, therefore, examines the effects of this practice on the attendees' faith. The research was conducted using in-depth interviews with identified respondents. In addition, data were gathered from churches and some identified Ori-Oke in Ilorin metropolis. Qualitative analysis of the data was done and the findings indicated the existence of a very wide gap between the perceived expected effects of Ori-Oke on the attendees, and the actual effects on them. This study recommended that enlightened and educative programme should be embarked upon by organisers of such events, as to forestall the depletion of the faith of their followers.

Introduction

Ori-Oke in this paper will be considered different from the physical, solid highlands or rocky structures that dot the land scape of our society. They will be considered as places set aside for periodic prayer/ worship that attract worshippers across denominational boundaries among the faithful of different religious lineages. *Ori-Oke* have become a common spiritual practice in almost all the existing religions in Nigeria.

Sacred mountains are central to certain religions and are the subject of many legends. For many, the most symbolic aspect of a mountain is the peak, because it is believed that it is closer to heaven. Many religions have traditions centred on sacred mountains which,

either are, or were, considered holy, such as, Mount Olympus (Naess 1995). Various cultures around the word maintain the importance of mountain worship as sacred. One example is Taranaki peoples of New Zealand (Smith 1997).

The Traditional African concepts of reality and destiny are deeply rooted in the spirit world. The activity and the actions of the spiritual being, govern all social and spiritual phenomena (Oji, 1988). The faithful that are, for one reason or the other, seeking spiritual resources to survive and flourish in difficult and challenging times, resort to prayer either in churches, homes or *Ori-Oke*.

Origin of Mountain Prayer

The African Traditional Religion believes that prayer is better answered on the mountains, because some mountains are believed to possess supernatural powers. Thus prayers are offered to them and on them, as people believe the mountains are able to grant their requests. Such mountains are designated 'sacred,' and the devotees prevent people from approaching them with contempt by making signs of warning on them or tying palm fronds on them. Sacred mountains are often viewed as a source of power which is to be awed and revered (Huntsinger and Maria, 2000). Huge mountains stretching several kilometres and thick forests are some of the landmarks of Nigerian country side. But often these are more than just mere landmarks: in many parts of Nigeria, mountains are worshipped as deities (Ajakaiye 2015). Odeyemi, the son of the priest of the mountain told Anadolu Agency 'it is the belief of our forefathers that the mountain in our village, Alabe, a small community, Ifelodun Local Government Kwara State is a source of power that can be consulted for assistance in times of need.' Similarly, the two mountains most commonly worshipped in South-West Nigeria are *Oke–Ibadan* in Ibadan and *Oke-Olumo* in Abeokuta. The histories of the two cities describe how their ancestors escaped from enemies by retreating into the mountains. The communities have since been worshipping the two mountains at popular annual festivals (Borokini, 2016).

In the Old Testament, the mountains of Sinai and Zion came to prominence. When God wanted to give the Ten Commandments, Law of Moses, Moses climbed the mountain and received them. Simply put, Mount Zion is the place where the gift of the Law, or Moses' Ten Commandments, was given to mankind. Therefore, the mountain is the symbol of God's Covenant with Israel in Zion. More telling is the location of the Jerusalem Temple. Again, the issue of mountain prayer came into the lime light when Elijah the prophet took the prophet of Baal unto Mount Camel in a challenge to determine the true God and God sent down fire to prove Himself (I Kings18: 22-40). On the same Mount Camel, Elijah prayed for the return of abundant rain to Israel (1Kings 18: 41-46). The ideas of God's presence and the availability of his authority and power on the mountain have become general beliefs in Israel. This is further established by the scripture in the books of the Old Testament with specific records in Obadiah, 1: 17, which says 'But on mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness. The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.' This opinion is further strengthened by Joel 2: 32 and Isaiah 2: 3 which say,

> Many people shall go and say come ye and let go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of God of Jacob and He will teach us of His ways: and we will walk in them, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

This shows that aside from expectation of miracles and deliverance, the Israelites, and indeed, modern Christians visit the mountains to know about the will and the law of the Lord.

In the New Testament Mark and Luke recorded that Jesus gathered the Twelve Disciples on a mountain and delivered the Beatitudes in his Sermon on the Mount, conjuring an image. Matthew paid attention to mountain 'scenes' relating Jesus' temptation (Mathew 4: 8); the Sermon on the Mount (Mathew 5: 1); a number of healings (15: 29); the Transfiguration (17: 1); Jesus' final discourse (24: 1) and the commissioning of the Apostles (28: 16). Perhaps the most significant mountain scene in the Gospels, however, is the

Transfiguration of Jesus. Jesus is accompanied by Moses and Elijah, who themselves encountered God on the mountain top in the Old Testament. Now, they encounter God through Jesus and Jesus, in turn, is seen as the fulfilment of the Law (Law of Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah).

Jesus Christ always went to a solitary place to pray when he was on earth, and when he was to start his ministry on earth. He was led unto the mountain to be tested by the devil (Luke 4: 1-14.). The Scripture recorded that he was led by the spirit into the wilderness where he fasted. His longest sermon, the Beatitudes, was given on the mountain (Mathew chapters 5, 6 and 7). Another mountain worship by Jesus was his transfiguration experience where in the presence of his three disciples, he was transfigured and communed with Moses and Elijah, the prophets of the Old Testament who descended to worship with him (Mathew 17: 1-13).To address serious issues of destiny, he took three of his disciples to Mount Olive where he prayed for the cup to pass over him, and urged them to pray not to enter temptation (Luke 22: 39-46).

In the Qur'an Chapter 52: 1-6, the Lord made an oath on Mount Toor where God spoke to Moses and released the written book that has the record of every person's actions in this life. Also Prophet Ibrahim was instructed by God to offer his son Ismael to him as mark of worship to Him. This shows that the mountain is recognized as special point of contact between God and His worshippers in Islam.

Why Mountain Prayer?

Just like any other human undertakings there are motives for mountain prayer. It is believed that prayer on the mountain helps a person to focus better, unlike what is obtained where there is crowd. The importance of mountain prayer to Christians cannot be over-emphasised. In fact it is an avenue for spiritual communication and a unifying factor in the context of a multi- religious society. In essence, mountain prayer offers spiritual sanctuary for the devotees and provides an almost direct link with God in the spirit.

Biblical records show that every time Moses went up the mountain, it was for God's purpose more than his own. For instance, God called Moses up to the mountain to speak to the Israelites. Similarly every time Jesus went to the Prayer Mountain, it was about the will of the Father for humanity. In essence, the mountain serves as a place of concentration and devotion to God's service. For instance there are many verses in the Scripture where people were instructed to consecrate themselves before coming to the mountain to meet Him (Exodus 19: 14-20).

Psychological Benefits of *Ori-Oke* to Attendees

As highlighted above, people attend *Ori-Oke* prayer mount for solutions to various problems, such as sickness, barrenness, drug addictions, etc. But apart from the perceived spiritual benefits accrued due to mountain top prayer, attendees have both psychological and physical gains associated with the programme. In the first instance, it is a place where people who seek solutions to their problems are welcome with passion and prompt attention. The conveners team up and pray for individuals over their problems. Consequently, the attendees, who were previously overwhelmed with problems and felt forsaken, enjoy the touch of being cared for and receive a flow of psychological relief and revived faith. According to Aiyegboyin (2010), the practice of visiting sacred mountains by the *Aladuras* constitutes a major factor of deliverance and conversions for these churches. He, in line with the position of this study, further claims that the general atmosphere in these sacred places, particularly mountains, gives psychological and tension relief to the worried soul. Put simply, aside the spiritual blessings, attendees of *Ori-Oke* derive psychological benefits and positive group interactions from mountain top prayer.

Ori-Oke Prayer and the Faith of Attendees

Today, Christians have several reasons and references to point to for their patronage of various *Ori-Oke* prayer centres. But be that as

it may, their expectation to participate in such programmes and get results rests largely on faith. The Bible defines faith as substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It also connotes both supernatural and natural things revealed by God (Hebrew11: 1, 3, 6, Psalm19: 1-14). Faith is, without any doubt, the complete confidence that matter exists without having been seen. It is therefore beyond the level of our senses. In Christendom, the role of faith cannot be over-emphasized. According to Shenouds (1989), faith is the basis of salvation, redemption and miracles. Its fruits comprise strength, peace, courage, tranquillity and restfulness in God's words that say 'Everything is possible for who believe' (Mark 9; 23).

God is the giver of faith by His mercy, grace and divine plan (Ephesians 2: 8-9). Hence, it is used to distinguish those who belong to Him, and those who don't. However, it is through a life of obedience to God that integrity of one's faith is tested. 'Now by this we know that we know Him if we keep his commandments. He who says, "I know Him" and does not keep His commandments is a liar and the faith is not in him' (1 John2: 3-4). Added to the above, faith plays indispensable role in man's salvation, and it is used to designate belief (John 12; 42 Heb 11; 6) Furthermore, it means trust (John14; 1 Romans 4; 17-20 and Luke 7.4), faithfulness (Habakkuk 2; 4 Gal: 3 9) and loyalty. Above all, faith is what sustains believers to the end and keeps their hope alive for eternal life with angels and saints, to see the Lord in paradise, and be resurrected from death into spiritual body.

The claims about the potency of faith are enhanced by Pardin (2000) who explored the relation between religious faith, spirituality, and mental health outcomes in 236 individuals recovering from substance abuse. The study found that recovering individuals tend to report high levels of religious faith and religious affiliation, but choose to rate themselves as being more spiritual than religious. Findings also indicate that among recovering individuals, higher levels of religious faith and spirituality were associated with a more optimistic life orientation, greater perceived social support, higher resilience to stress, and lower levels of anxiety.

In summary, faith in the practice of mountain-top prayer is justified by the verses cited above that show people, prophets and kings in the Old Testament visiting the mountains, and expressing belief and faith in the presence of God and His power and authority on the mountain. Above all in the New Testament, Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrew 12: 2), visited the mountain on several occasions to solve knotty issues with prayers.

As a result of the relevance given to the mountains and the belief that prayers are better answered on the mountain in the scripture, Christians all over the world have taken to the idea of setting up Prayer Mountain centres and visiting such places. The development of mountain prayer in Nigeria is dated to the 1930s.The first, the popular and famous Babalola Prayer Mountain, is called the *Ori-Oke Aanu* (Mountain of Mercy), Erio-Ekiti in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It was founded by Apostle Ayo Babalola and is open to everyone. Some great prophets who believe in Babalola's wonders link their callings to *Olorun Babalola Ori-Oke Erio* to start their ministry there on the mountain. Some of the notable Prayer Mountains in South-West Nigeria include: *Ori-Oke Aluyo* and *Ori-Oke Irapada*, Oyo State. Others are *Ori-Oke Ikoyi, Ori-Oke Agbara Aseyori*, *Akoko Mi* Prayer Mountain, Osun State, *Baba Shiloh* Prayer Mountain, Ibadan-Ife Expressway (Tribune Jul 10, 2016). Notable Prayer Mountains in Ilorin Kwara State are: *Oke Sobi*, *Oke Adua* Basin, *Ori-Oke* Michael Imodu, Alagbede and Tanke.

Interviews

In the light of this study, the interviews were conducted with the following: pastors, conveners and attendees of the programmes, as well as, individuals and traders who are non-participants in *Ori-Oke* prayers. Ade Adeyemi, pastor and founder, Bible Other Church, Ilorin and conveyer of a weekly mountain prayer programme called 'Solution Time,' has this to say about *Ori-Oke* mountain prayer and spirituality: 'My belief in the efficacy of prayer on the mountain remained unshaken. This is born out of inexhaustible references of various mountain prayer experiences of the Old/ New testament life

of the Bible.' He also said, 'due to long years of practical experience of God proving Himself powerful in the midst of our weekly mountain prayer, I cannot but hold that mountain prayer is a divine arrangement given to man by God to get closer to Him better than in the usual environment.' Janet Amadi said:

> I have been attending this mountain programme tagged 'Solution Time' for the past four years, if there is anything to say, I would say that God has really surprised me. I brought any problem to this mountain and within a short time it would disappear. I think God has really blessed me through my attendance of 'Solution Time' mountain prayer meetings. However, we see some that have been coming, who due to lack of faith have not received anything. Such people can express resentment about the programme and its like.

Muslimat Anibaba states:

> Though I'm not a Christian, I started coming to this programme, bringing my wares for sales. After about six months of coming, I observed that the lives of people attending the program kept on improving, so I decided to join them in prayers, while I continued with my business. The experience has taught me how to live peacefully with people of different faith, and that God answers everybody's prayer regardless of their religion. The programme is good and helpful for those who understand and key into it. However, there is never a good thing without a bad side. Some go there to commit fornication or adultery. So also some erroneously believe that prayer is about the blessings, and no more about the will of God. Added to the above there are cases of people suspected to have died from marathon fasting and prayers on mountains and some even falling sick.

Prot (Venerable) Ade' Malomo, Vicar of St Peter Anglican Church, Adewole Ilorin, claimed that mountain prayer as a practice originated in the Eastern part of the world. It was the belief in the ancient Eastern bloc that the higher you go, the closer you are to God, and as such worshippers went up to the top of the mountain to

pray. This belief predates any biblical references on mountain prayer and informed building tower-like structures as temples of worship. The building of the tower of babel was premised on a similar belief. He said the issue of getting closer to God on the mountain is further strengthened in the bible by various circumstances where God instructs the prophets and the people to meet him on the mountain, such as the time He instructed Abraham in Genesis, 14 to offer his only son as sacrifice to him on the mountain. He (God) asked Moses to meet him on the mountain to collect the Ten Commandments, and at times, to take instructions. He concluded by claiming that in the New Testament, Jesus often visited the mountains to pray; he had his longest sermon delivered on mountain and had part of his temptation on the mountain.

Malomo told us that Jesus, who is also a Jew and whose religion is Judaism, came in contact with the Samaritan woman who expressed the traditional or cultural belief of her people, the Jews that they should worship on a particular mountain. Jesus, not debunking the concept of mountain prayer, carefully and tactically corrected her, by emphasizing the fact that God is not restricted to a particular place or mountain for worship. Hence, he said the father God is spirit, and he wants people who will serve him in truth and spirit, meaning their God is present everywhere as a spirit and can be reached and worshipped anywhere and at all times. Malomo further claimed that the Anglicans do not visit the mountain for prayers. At the same time, they don't have anything against those who go to the mountain to pray. However, they recommend those going to the mountain to do so with caution, not seeing the mountain as a sacred object or above God.

Maloma concluded that he holds no objection to *Ori-Oke* (mountain prayers), because he knows if those going there believe and have faith in God, they will definitely meet Him there. He believes that since *Ori-Oke* are far away from distractions, people are able to concentrate more on prayer and commune better with God. Pastor Benjamin Elewa of Living Christ International Ministry appraised *Ori-Oke* Prayers from the scripture quotation, thus, 'But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance and there shall be holiness and

the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions' (Obadiah 1: 17). He then interpreted the above scriptural quotation as evidence that deliverance from the oppression of the devil, leaving sinful life to holiness and the possession of one's rights in life are features of *Ori-Oke* (mountain prayer). Furthermore, he described the place as a platform of revival and intimacy with God, devoid of distractions for both the convener and attendees. Other benefits he ascribed to the platform were that it serves as bridges for Christians and non-Christians of different backgrounds and stands as a place of last resort for spiritual solutions.

The pastor, however, lamented that some conveners are not well rooted in the words of God, while the programmes do not give enough attention to the study of the Bible. Other weaknesses he identified with *Ori-Oke* prayer are the low standard of conveners' education and lack of adequate information about their identities and those of the attendees. He explains that these flaws allow fake prophets or conveners to hijack the programmes for their selfish ends. Other weaknesses he identified with the programme include fornicators, miracle seekers and thieves loitering in the place and preying on individuals.

Mrs. Are of Holy Ghost Harvest Church spoke about the Old Testament reference to *Ori-Oke* when God ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son on Mount Horeb and for Moses to meet him on Mount Sinai, thus, making the practice biblical. Jesus visited the mountain to pray, to teach and to retreat personally and, at times, with His disciples.

Today Mountain Prayer is a place for personal retreat and personal contact with God. It allows one to access service outside designated church environment to God, meaning you can worship God in a way you can't in the church. For example, one can engage in the act of rolling on the floor. Your service on the mountain can be in isolation or during a free time. This takes away the interference of others. The answer to prayer on the mountain depends on faith, and the quality of concentration and determination. In fact it is leaving one's comfort zone to commune with God.

Findings

The study reveals that some conveners are not well rooted in the words of God, and the programmes do not give enough attention to the study of the Bible. Other weaknesses identified with most of the conveners were that they lack appreciable spiritual standard, befitting the roles they occupy. Also there is not adequate information about their identity and that of the attendees. To this end, the platform is observed to be porous for the inflow of fake prophets, faceless commercial conveners and dubious individuals, taking advantage of *Ori-Oki* for their selfish ends. Of course, the same set of people are said to be found committing vices, such as fornication, adultery, conducting water baths for matured ladies, engaging in the commodification of spirituality, and selling them at exploitative prices in secret transactions. At some centres the authors observed items such as water, oil, handkerchiefs, and mantles being sold on the pretence of their being sanctified for the release of spiritual powers to the buyers. It was also observed that some devotees demonstrated gave unnecessary significance to *Ori-Oke,* such that the mountain had become some sort of replacement for God's presence, thus attributing God's doing to either the mountain or the pastors. Some have the belief that their prayers can only be answered on the mountains, just like the erroneous belief of the Samaritan woman in the Gospel of John, Chapter 4: 20 'Our father worship in this mountain and yea say in Jerusalem man ought to worship.' However, Jesus responded by correcting the erroneous impression in verses 21-24.

Furthermore, conveners, pastors, attendees and people of various backgrounds interviewed observed that *Ori-Oke* prayer events have in no small measure helped in keeping and sustaining the lives of attendees and those of their families. They have also helped in solving some unimaginable problems in peoples' lives. The researchers in a participation, witnessed two women testifying that they were each blessed with a child through mountain prayer, after being barren for three and seven years, respectively. In light of the diverse religious backgrounds of the people patronising *Ori-Oke*

mountain prayer, the cordiality within the group and the teamwork they demonstrate have become a solace to people across racial and religious divides. It is a place people can play down differences and team up in solving an individual's problems, relieving people of life's pressures and stress, and giving them a psychological boost by reviving their faith. A convener gave the beauty of *Ori-Oke* prayer as avenue where religion, particularly intolerance, cannot survive.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study, the relevance and importance of *Ori-Oke* mountain prayer centres cannot be controverted, due to the bulk of benefits and the positive contributions they make to the lives of individuals and the nation as a whole. Nationally, Mountain Prayer activities have helped in unifying diverse religions. In fact, *Ori-Oke* is a forum for grassroots development and religion tolerance in Nigeria. They are to the advantage of harmonious living among people with divergent beliefs in the country.

However, ascribing God's status to objects or personalities observed in the practice of faith of some devotees negates the kind of faith Jesus represents, which the mountain prayer centres are supposed to uphold and expand. Therefore, to fully reap the benefits of the *Ori-Oke*, the faith that works all things in God should be promoted by the conveners, rather than idolization of objects and their personalities. In depth study of the words of God should be adopted to discourage the devotees from engaging in unholy and unwholesome practices such as rolling on the rock, drinking unhygienic water or exposing their nakedness for prayer and spiritual bath. Similarly conscious efforts need to be adopted by the conveners with the aid of the religious bodies of their affiliation and government to set a standards for establishing *Ori-Oke* prayer centres, giving room for the registration of the identity of the conveners and their key personalities.

Based on the findings that spirituality is commercialized, and devotees suffer high degrees of exploitation, with some devotees

equating their pastors and the conveners of *Ori-Oke* with God, measures should be put in place to regulate the conveners and the attendees. In essence, god is a God of universe whose presence, authority and power cannot be restricted or localized. Hence, He said: 'Behold, I am the Lord, the god of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for me?' and:

Jesus sayest unto her, woman belief me the hour cometh when yee shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship for salvation is of the Jews but the hour commeth and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the father in the spirit and in the truth: For the father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in truth and in the spirit.

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Chapter 14

Mountain *Ori-Oke* within the Context of Islamic Theology

Aylina Saadu Alanamu

Abstract

The central text of Islam is the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an is the main source of Islamic theology followed by Hadith, Ijma and Qiyas. The Qur'an as an apogee of Islam, addresses all issues including mountain sites. There is no doubt that Islamic theories on mountains abound, yet neither their exact epistemological status, nor their educational value is always obvious. Their relevance to Islamic worship is often hotly contested. Thus, this paper examines the concept of the mountain within the context of Islamic theology. The word mountain in both the singular and plural forms is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an 39 times, and, in 12 distinctive verses, the Qur'an outlines the basic geologic concepts of mountains. The paper traces the historical journey of mountains as sites of spiritualism in Islam. It then concludes with the submission that the mountain is not a new historical phenomenon in Islam and efforts should be made to educate the people on the Islamic stance on the issue of mountains.

Introduction

Mountains are one of the important places of worship in Islam. This stems from the vital role of mountains revealed in the Qur'an centuries ago as an example of supreme wisdom in God's creation:

> If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of Allah Qur'an 59: 21.

Most people know the importance and significance of prayer, but many seem uncertain as to how, when, and where to pray. The

mountain, in the Qur'anic context, is the place where Almighty God reveals himself. It may be on this ground that some Muslims converge on mountains for special prayers. The word 'mountain' in both the singular and plural forms is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an 39 times, and in 12 distinctive verses, the Qur'an outlines the basic geologic concepts of mountains (El-Naggar, 2003).

The aim of this study is to examine the relevance of mountain sites within the context of Islamic theology. To accomplish this objective, the paper is divided into the following sections: section one, dealing with the introductory aspect; section two, examining the conceptual framework; section three, discussing the mountain within the context of Islamic theology; section four, focusing on some lessons; and section five, the concluding remarks.

Conceptual Framework

A proper understanding of this study should begin with the nuances surrounding Islamic theology. Islamic theology (*ʿIlm al-Kalām*) literally is a science of discourse (Winter, 2008). It is an Islamic effort developed out of the need to establish and defend the tenets of Islamic faith against ambiguity. The uniqueness of Islamic theology lies in the comprehensiveness of its principles, valid through ages in respect to the whole of humanity. Islamic theology has two basic foundations: the Qur'an and Hadith. The duo are the principal sources of theology relating to Islam. The major secondary sources, which are otherwise known as man-inspired sources, are Ijma, Qiyas and Ijtihad.

The Qur'an is the most authentic and authoritative source of Islamic theology. The Qur'an is the central religious text of Islam, which Muslims consider it to be the verbatim word of Almighty Allah (Nasr, 2007). The Qur'an is regarded widely as the finest piece of literature in the Arabic language (Speicher, 1997; Taji-Farouki, 2004; and Kermani, 2006). The Qur'an was verbally passed through the angel Jibrīl from Allah to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) over a period of approximately 23 years beginning in 610 CE, when Prophet

Muhammad was 40, and concluding in 632 CE, the year of his death (Nasr, 2007; Fisher, 1997).

The Qur'an is one of the most widely read books in the world. The Quran has many other names. Among those found in the text itself are: *al-kitāb* (The Book) (Qur'an 2: 2); *al-Furqān*, or the separator/criterion between truth and falsehood (Qur'an 25: 1); *al-Huda*, or the guardian (Qur'an 2: 2); *an-Nur*, or the light or illumination that illuminates the path for mankind (7: 157); *Ashifau*, or the remedy to any spiritual, social, physical ailment (10: 57); *al-Maoizah*, or the admonition that encourages and enjoins righteousness, but forbids all evils and indecency (10: 57); *al-Tanzeel*, or the revelation from Allah to Prophet Muhammad through the arch angel; *Dikrallāh*, or 'the remembrance of God'; *al-ḥikmah*, or 'the wisdom'; and *Kalāmallāh*, or 'the word of God.'

The Hadith (pl. Ahadith), the repository for the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammed, is another principal source of Islamic theology. *Sunnah* means the Prophet's mode of life including his utterances, discourses, practices and usage. By extension, it covers his tacit approval of the sayings and deeds of his companions**,** the *Sahabah* (Quadri, 1995).

In the terminology of Islamic jurists, *Ijma* implies a consensus of opinion of the *Mujtahids,* or the collective interpretation or decision of a group of early or contemporary scholars on a question of theology. Its authority as a source of law is based on certain Qur'anic verses and the sayings of the Prophet, chiefly the saying: 'My followers will not agree upon an error or what is wrong' (Muselludin, 1988).

Qiyas is another source of Islamic theology. The root meaning of the *Qiyas* is 'measuring.' The function of *Qiyas* is to discover the cause or *illah* of the revealed law so as to extend it to similar cases (Muselludin, 1988).

Ijtihad is a generic term for the procurement of legal sanctions (to discover the law from its sources) to modern issues based on the Qur'an and Hadith. *Ijtihad* (intellectual reasoning) plays a very important part in Islamic theology, as the value of reason is expressly recognized in the Holy Qur'an. The text appears to reason again and

again, and is full of exhortations like the following: 'Do you not reflect?'; 'Have you no sense?'; 'Do you not understand?' Those who do not use their reasoning faculty are compared to animals, and are spoken of in the Qur'an as being deaf, dumb and blind (2: 171, 2: 179, 8: 22, 25: 44, 3: 189-190).

The word 'mountain' is a derivative of Latin word *montanus*, which is described as a landmass that projects conspicuously above its surroundings and is higher than a hill. The term is usually applied to heights of more than 610 meters; all below that amount are regarded as hills, and when of considerable heights, hillocks (El-Naggar, 2003). From the forgoing, it becomes obvious that all definitions of mountains, both literal and scientific, restrict themselves to the conspicuous protrusion of such landforms above their surroundings. Thus, mountain prayer can be conceptualized as a structure erected on a high landform for the purpose of prayer, meditation and fasting. The practice of erecting a structure on mountain for spiritual activities is rooted in religious mysticism, where worshippers renounce worldly connections to dedicate themselves solely to spiritual development.

Relevance of Mountain Sites in Islam

The miraculous nature of the Glorious Qur'an is not confined to a certain field or time, but it emerges to challenge people in whatever field they master. The Holy Qur'an, as the apogee of Islamic guidance, contains principles of human behaviour. As the Holy Qur'an puts it: 'We have sent down thee Book explaining all things' (Qur'an xvi: 89). The Holy Qur'an draws attention to a very important geological function of mountains.

We placed firmly embedded mountains on the Earth, so that it would not move under them (Surah Al-Anbyia 31).

There are many portions of the Quran that describe the mountain as a divine, natural place of spiritual development and refuge. The Qur'an refers to mountains of historic importance such as those where the *Thamud* people lived (Qur'an 7: 74; 15: 82 & 26: 149).

The Holy Qur'an tells us the story of Prophet Nuh (Noah) and his people. The Holy Qur'an says 'we remember Nuh, when he cried to us aforetime: We listened to his (prayer) and delivered him and his family from great distress' (Qur'an 21: 76). 'So the Ark floated with them on the waves (towering) like mountains and Nuh called out to his son, who had separated himself (from the rest)':

> O my son! Embark with us, and be not with the unbelievers!
>
> The son replied: "I will betake myself to some mountain: it will save me from the water."
>
> Nuh said: "This day nothing can save, from the command of Allah, any but those on whom He hath mercy!
>
> And the waves came between them, and the son was among those overwhelmed in the Flood (Qur'an 11: 42-43).

The Holy Qur'an also refers to mountains which were the scenes of performed miracles such as the mountains of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) or those of Prophet Musa (Moses) (Qur'an 2: 260 & 7: 143, 171). God spoke to Prophet Musa (ASW) on the Mount Toor.

And when Musa (Moses) came at the time and place appointed by Us, And his Lord (Allah) spoke to him: he said, O' my Lord, show me (yourself) that I may look at You. Allah said: You cannot see Me, but look at the mountain; if it stands still in its place, then you shall see Me. So when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He made it collapsed to the dust, and Musa (Moses) fell down unconscious. And when he recovered his senses, he said, glory be to You! I turned to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers (Qur'an 7: 143).

The place of mountains in the spiritual activities of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is equally reverberated in the Holy Qur'an. It is a truism that before the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad used to retreat for a month every year on the mountain of *Hira*' in Makkah. When he finished his seclusion, he would return to circumambulate the *Ka'aba* seven times before going home. One day, the Prophet had retreated in *Hira*' in the month of *Ramadan* when he was visited by the Angel Jubril who read to him the first

verses of the Holy Qur'an to be revealed. Angel Jubril commanded him to read, but Prophet Muhammad could not read and he replied, I am not a reader. Then Angel Jubril replied with following verses of the Qur'an (96.1-5):

> Read in the name of your Lord who created.
> He created man from a clot.
> Read and your Lord is the most honourable,
> who teaches by the pen.
> He taught man what he did not know.

Prophet Muhammad's first revelation was the event in which he was visited by the Archangel Jubril in 610 CE, who revealed to him a verse from the Holy Qur'an. The event took place in a cave called Hira, located on the mountain called Jabal an-Nour, near Makkah. While on retreat in a mountain cave near Makkah (the cave of Hira), Angel Jubril appeared before Muhammad and commanded him to recite the first lines of chapter 96 of the Qur'an. Prophet Muhammad's experience is mentioned in the Qur'an 53: 4–9:

> It is no less than inspiration sent down to him:
> He was taught by one Mighty in Power, Endued with Wisdom: for he appeared (in stately form); While he was in the highest part of the horizon: Then he approached and came closer, and was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer;

It has become a symbolic event for Muslims over the centuries to climb to the top of the 600-meter high Mountain of Hira to visit the cave where the Qur'an was first revealed and to seek blessings. The name Hira has become used almost exclusively for that cave, whereas the mountain has become known as the 'Mountain of Nur (Light)', in reference to the revelation of the light of the Qur'an.

Some Lessons

There is no disputing the fact that mountain sites are acknowledged in Islam as places of spiritualism as revealed by the activities of prophets of God and Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). However, mountain prayer has generated controversies among Muslims in recent times. While some believe that mountain prayer is allowed without limitation, others outright oppose the view, and maintain that there are certain conditions attached to its acceptance (Haruna, 2017).

Nevertheless, there are lessons to be learnt from the above discourse, which can serve as a guide on the issue of mountain prayer within the context of Islamic theology. It should be deduced from the above that many prophets of God, especially Prophet Musa and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had, at one time or another, utilized mountain sites for spiritual activities. The first revelation of the Qur'an came to Prophet Muhammad during his retreat in Hira cave, located on the mountain of Jabal an-Nour, near Makkah.

Apart from the above, Mountain Arafat also occupies an important place of worship in Islam. This is a site where Prophet Muhammad delivered his farewell sermon. Mount Arafat, *Jabal'Arafāt,* is a plain of about 20 km (12 miles) at the southeastern part of Makkah. Mount Arafat reaches about 70 m (230 ft) in height and is also known as the Mount of Mercy, *Jabalar-Rahmah*. It, therefore, became a continued practice for pilgrims to go to Mount Arafat in Mina on the 9th of the month of *Dhu al-Hijjah*. It is an important part of the Hajj, where the sermon *Khutbah* of Hajj is given. The pilgrims also wait to perform their *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers in congregation and then spend the whole day on the mountain top for supplications.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has brought to the fore the significance of mountains within the context of Islamic theology. It is a truism that the mountain occupies important sites of spiritual activities in Islam. The mountain, in the Qur'an, is the place where Almighty God reveals

himself. The word 'mountain' in both the singular and plural forms is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an 39 times, and in 12 distinctive verses, the Qur'an outlines the basic geologic concepts of mountains. There are many portions of Quran that describe mountain as a divine, natural place of spiritual development and refuge. This has been exemplified in the life of some prophets of *Allah*.

Deriving from the foregoing discussion, the mountain site has been seen to be important for spiritual activities in Islam. Although there is no specific reference in the Holy Qur'an of Muslims praying on mountain, the Qur'an makes references to various historical spiritual activities on mountains. Contemporary Muslims also follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad, who retreated to mountain sites for spiritual activities. It is important to educate Muslims on the significance of mountains in Islam. Muslims can conduct spiritual activities on mountain sites, but with limitations. In Islam, mountain sites are not to be designated as centres for regular acts of worships like mosques, but occasionally, worshippers can retreat to mountain sites, where they can renounce worldly connections to dedicate themselves solely to spiritual development.

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Chapter 15

The Ecclesiastical Status of the Clergy in Relations to *Ori-Oke* in Ilorin Metropolis

Lawal, Owolabi Joseph

Abstract

In view of the present state of prayer in Nigeria, the Prayer Mountain cannot be ignored as one of the channels of prayers by indigenous churches across Nigeria. The experience of indigenous churches has shown that some of these Prayer Mountains are controlled by half-baked, semi-educated prophets. Ori-Oke is open to all and sundry, righteous and unrighteous, holy and unholy, spot and spotless depending on what the rules of the mountain specify. The aim of this paper is to assess the ecclesiastical status of the clergies in relation to Ori-Oke in Ilorin Metropolis. The paper employs historical and descriptive methods. The paper, therefore, posits that, since Prayer Mountains are said to be sanctimonious and sacred, righteousness should be associated with them. The paper concludes by recommending that clergies of Ori-Oke be theologically trained and morally sound. In other words, they must be well-versed in the scriptures and very educated. This will reduce unbiblical or extra-biblical practices.

Introduction

The sixth chapter of Isaiah records a unique call to ministry, in which the prospective prophet is caught up in an ecstatic vision, and the Lord commissions him for the work. It would be very helpful if God planned a similar experience for all who showed an interest in the ministry of *Ori-Oke* (Carry, 2017). Throughout the world, the need to train more prophets to the ministry of *Ori-Oke* to care for rapidly multiplying flocks has forced a change.

There is indeed a subjective side to a call to ministry. People do go into the prophetic ministry because they feel they have God's claim in their lives toward prophetic or pastoral ministry. Before

accepting any call to the ministry, the prospective pastor or prophet would be wise to ask himself two important questions. First, has he experienced sufficient training to prepare him for this challenge? Secondly, is he a disciplined person? Will he be able to manage his time wisely so that he can accomplish the many tasks required of a prophet or pastor? A person who continually wastes time and procrastinates unpleasant duties probably should procrastinate before responding to what he should do on time. It is very germane to note that a well-trained clergy who has ecclesiastical qualification will not only be popular on earth but also be rewarded in heaven.

Definition of Key Terms

It is very important for this paper to define some relevant terms for the purpose of clarification.

Ecclesiastic

The word 'ecclesiastic' refers to a church, especially as an established institution. It is suitable for use in a church. The term 'ecclesiastic status,' therefore, connotes the matters, principles and status of the church. There are principles in all disciplines in the world, and those principles are applied to the church for the smooth and effective running of the organization.

Furthermore, the word 'ecclesiastic' describes a member of the clergy, typically someone associated with a Christian church. The word has origin in the Greek word *ekklesiastes* meaning 'speaker in an assembly or church' and can be used to describe someone associated with a church, such as a cleric or a priest (Ecclesiastic Database Online, 2007).

Clergy

In Christianity, the specific names and roles of a clergy vary by denomination, and there is a wide range of formal and informal clergy positions, including deacons, priests, bishops, pastors, prophets, prophetess and the pope. In Islam, a religious leader is often known formally or informally as an imam, mufti or ayatollah. In Jewish

tradition, a religious leader is often a rabbi or hazzan (cantor) (Amindsen, 1988: 210).

Clergy can be grouped as a group or body of ordained persons in a religion, as distinguished from the laity. A person who has been legitimately received into the ranks of the clergy. Clergy, in a strict sense, is meant the entire ecclesiastical hierarchy. Consequently, a clergy is one who belongs in some sense to the hierarchy. For this, it is necessary that he have received at least the tonsure. The clergy, by divine right, form an order or state, which is essentially distinct from that of the laity. Christ did not commit the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacrament to the faithful in general but to certain carefully defined persons, the Apostles and the seventy-two disciples. They also received the power of governing the flocks, a power represented by the keys, a well-known oriental symbol for authority.

Furthermore, that the distinction between clergy and laity was recognized in New Testament times is plain from St. Paul's statement that the bishops have been placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the church (Acts 20: 26), for the right to rule implies a correlative obligation to obey. Presbyters are continually distinguished from the laity throughout the Pauline Epistles.

Moreover, the word cleric (Latin-Clericus from Clerus) is derived from the Greek *Kieros,* a 'tot' in the Septuagint. This word is used in the literal sense quite frequently, though not in its later technical sense. In the first epistle of St. Peter v. 3, it is applied to the entire body of the faithful. The use of the word in its present restricted meaning occurs, however, as early as the third century. It is found in Tertullian (De Idel, viii), Origen (Hom. In Jer., xi, 3) and Clement of Alexandria (Quis dives salvetur, C. xiii). In this sense, it is not easy to determine exactly how the world came to have its present determinate meaning. The 'Pontificale Romanum' refers to the clerics as being those whose 'lot' is the Lord Himself, and St. Jerome explicitly derives the name from that fact. These statements do not give us, however, the steps by which *Kueros*, 'lot' became 'clergy' or 'cleric.' Probably the best suggested explanation is that lot or portion came to mean a particular lot or office assigned to someone, and

finally, the person himself possessing the lot or office (Bear 1962: 428).

Ori-Oke

A Prayer Mountain is a facility on a piece of elevation, for the purpose of fasting, prayer and other spiritual functions. It is a secluded place of prayer for those who desire a place to be alone with God. Nigerian people are known for their religiosity. Some Muslims and Christians who converge at the mountains in Ilorin and beyond converge for reasons and concerns that are peculiar to an individual or group. In other words, people who attend the mountain for prayers, go there for personal, spiritual and non-spiritual gains. Religion as an institution, therefore, could facilitate the growth and development of other spheres significantly. Based on the topic of this paper, 'the ecclesiastical statuses of clergy in relation to the *Ori-Oke* in Ilorin metropolis' Christ Apostolic Church Prayer Mountain of Mercy (*Ori-Oke* Aanu), located at km 2 gospel village road, off Igbo Oloyin Ojoo, Ibadan, Nigeria was founded in 1992. In a vision, God instructed Pastor Moses Alade-Olu to leave his house and go to a mountain. God showed him that the mountain had a gate, and being a contractor and having many pieces of land within the mountains, he started visiting all his pieces of land to see which of the mountains had the kind of gate God showed to him, to no avail. He separated himself to pray after which God asked him to meet Him on a mountain to stay there until he is made (Bear 1962: 428).

He was on one mountain at Ojoo, Ibadan, one day the authority of the mountain asked him to lead a programme. On that day, the power of God moved so mightily, that there was impartation of the spirit; then the founder of the mountain gave him a room to stay in. Gradually, the management of the mountain was committed into his hand, and at every programme there was always one or more miracle. However, some people ganged up against him, challenging the management for putting the affairs of the *Ori-Oke* in his care. The group told the founder, Pastor Okegbemi, that Alade-Olu was planning to take the leadership of the mountain from him. Pastor

Alade-Olu then began to seek the face of God by fasting for seven days. Pastor Alade-Olu speaks:

> One day, God ask me to pick up the megaphone that I use for morning cry, that I should go into one bush to preach. At first, I refused. How can I go and preach in a bush, when there are people out there to preach to? But since He specified where to preach, I had to go there. On my way, coming back after the morning cry, God instructed me not to go through where I came through. He showed me a way that I should go through. On my way, behold I saw the door which he showed me at the entrance of the mountain. I was surprised, then I went back to the mountain, where I was before, joyfully and rejoicing. After the second day, I asked God to send somebody to me, since the Bible says from the mouth of two or three witnesses shall the truth be confirmed. At first, God sent a pastor to me; Pastor Kumoluyi from Lagos. He said, 'God is taking you to somewhere, don't waist the opportunity.' I thank God for the day, but because of the misunderstanding that was on ground, I asked God to send the founder to me to confirm his word.

The man came in on Sunday morning and said, 'Revivalist, God said is time for you to proceed to a mountain.' But I knew the meaning of what he was saying. That same morning, I left for the place with my megaphone, bell and clothes. I rang the bell and conduct my Sunday service for lizard and grasses around with joy. After the service, I went back there to call a friend of mine, Pastor Obisesan, to come and stay there with me. Truly he followed me to the place, but on getting to the place, he could not stay with me. He said the place was dangerous. He left and I was there on the mountain praying, since God has instructed me to fast for 14 days, God instruct me to go and call Pastor Obisesan again, but on getting there, it was cloudy. Then he said after the rain he will come. God ask me to tell him that it will not rain until I finish the 14 days fasting and prayer that I'm doing but he said if it does not rain he will come, though it those not rain for that 14 days but he did not come until 16th day after it rain (Bear 1962: 428).

Where I am now there were many problems, but angel of God always appear to comfort me and show me many things to come, but God have told me that Isaiah 41 vs. 10-11 should be my watchword. At first a man came and ask to leave where I am that some people have bought the place he get me arrested while I was in the station a man walk in and saw me he ask 'what are you doing here?' I told him what happen. Unfortunately they know each other, he call him and said that your trap could not catch an evil man why is it that is this righteous man your own trap? he was still argue, that this man is evil man, but the man told him that I have help many of their family; that before 10am the other day that he will feel the hand of God in his house. Immediately he ask me to go and he took me to another place not far to where I was before. He ask me to stay there till he settle some case. He inform me that some people told him that I am evil man. It was under a tree, so I thank God for he see me through the case, suddenly I heard a voice saying that instead of him to worship me he his saying nonsense. At first I thought it was God, so I went to where I was before. I lied down to worship him, and God said he was there and that speak. He ask me to go back there that and worship him that will meet with he there and that thing we speak again then I should answer him. Then I go back to that place as I lay down to worship god then that thing ask me if I'm worship him or God, then I reply that it is written that all things as been put under his feet, then why should I worship you, you have challenge God that created you and you will cease to live that night there was a small rain no heavy wind but the tree falls down.

After then many things has happen but god always show himself as Lion of Judah. In 1994, we lay a foundation of Prophet Michel Ojo Olowere, was the one who lay the foundation. After this, some people rise up that we cannot build the hall. Some days after, some gang came at night with arm asking for me. That night I could see them, but when they saw me, they said the man they are looking for does not have tribal mark. But these man have though they kill a man. But my God protect me. After they've left, we went to call police and they came to inspect the place and they carry the mummy away to bury. Some people advise me to depart from a mountain for while

but God told me that he has prepare a guard for me on the mountain, though I was afraid. But because God as instruct me to go back, when I got to the mountain, though I was afraid. But because God as instruct me to go back, when I got to the mountain four guys came to me that I should take a whistle that anytime something like that happen I should blow the whistle, but after sometime I could not find the whistle again.

Some years later somebody came to the mountain that I should come and join hand with him, that while I'm alive I will be rich. I will only scarify a cow every year and the cow he will be the one to produce it. I told him that see I will like to join hand with you, but the one who bring me here has hold my two hands. So which hand will I use now? The man was so annoyed that he told me that I will come and find him, but glory be to God for day by day he give me reason to get more close to him and trust him.

Ilorin

It is clear that the two foreign religions, Islam and Christianity, met the traditional or indigenous religion solidly on ground in Ilorin. Rules and regulations were made governing their social, political, economic and more importantly, religious activities. However, with the introduction of Islam and its acceptance by the people of Ilorin, the new religion partly formed the basis of their view, thinking and perception.

The Christian missionaries tried in vain in the 19th century to make converts into Christianity via education in Ilorin. However, they left their footprints in the area of establishment of schools, which were also mission stations. Their presence and educational activities sensitized and energized the Ilorin indigenes towards their educational responsibilities to themselves, their children, their wards and the community at large. Thus, there was strong competition between the Christian missionaries and the Ilorin Emirate authority in the provision of western education.

However, it is remarkable to note that in spite of the cultural dilution brought about by the two foreign religions, the Ilorin people remained strongly attached to their extended family structure. Many

built ultra-modern houses in the Government Reserved Areas (GRAs) and other government layouts yet remained in their family houses. Another interesting area is out of court settlement of disputes among families, friends and well-wishers. The people of Ilorin hate taking dispute either to the police or court. Cases taken there are usually withdrawn. Disputes are referred to the head of household, head of family, ward head, Imams, Islamic scholars et cetera. Verdicts given are usually valid and binding on the parties.

Finally, it is important to note that there is nothing bad in analysing and adopting what is good in other people's or nation's cultures with a view to quickening development, but developing communities or nations should be cautious of wholesale acceptance of foreign cultures for the fear of total extermination of their own.

Ilorin area, which we refer to here as 'Ilorin Emirate,' comprises Asa, Moro, Ilorin: West, East and South Local Government Areas of Kwara State. This emirate, as we have earlier noted was in the seventeenth century a pagan community. It was a Yoruba settlement under the tutelage of the Alafin of Oyo. Ilorin later became an independent enclave of Afonja, the Yoruba warlord, Aare Onakakanfo.

However, by the close of the seventeenth century, some Muslim scholars had begun to settle in Ilorin. Sheikh Solagberu (Abdullahi Tahir) and his compatriots settled at Oke-Sunna. Other scholars in the town included Shaikh Muhammad Munabai and his wife Aishat, Shaikh Sasini, Shaikh Sanusi, Shaikh Muhammad Thanni and others known and unknown to history. The scholars engaged in intensive teaching, preaching and converting the natives to Islam. By this, Islam became established and attained an appreciable influence which it maintained until the coming of Shaikh Alimi in 1817. The settlement of Shaikh Alimi in Ilorin greatly increased the holdings of Islam (Hassan, nd: 15).

With the untiring efforts of Shaikh Alimi and the ever increasing Jamaa, a Jihad was waged, which led to the establishment of Ilorin Emirate in 1823. By the end of the nineteenth century, Ilorin had become 'a local Mecca to which the Yoruba Muslims turned for study and guidance.' For details on the establishment, development,

operation, religious, economic and social affairs of Ilorin Emirate in the 19th and 20th centuries, see, among others, the works of Gavin, Danmole, O'Hear, Banwo, Olaoye and Jimoh.

In the 19th century, the Christian missionaries struggled in vain to establish mission stations in Ilorin in order to make converts of among the natives. The Christian missionaries that visited Ilorin in the 19th century were the Baptist Mission in 1855, represented by Reverend Bowen, and the Church Missionary Society in 1855, 1859 and 1898, represented by Reverend Adolphus Mann, Bishop Ajayi Crowther and bishop Tugwell, respectively. Although the Ilorin Emirate authority was considered friendly with the missionaries, she refused to grant them the permission to preach the gospel or establish mission stations. This was based on the fear that Christianity might contaminate Islam, the state religion.

However, with the establishment of an effective colonial administration in Ilorin, the Emirate Authority from 1917 could not outright turn down the request of the missionaries to build mission stations. Consequently, permissions were granted and mission stations were opened at the outskirts of the town in 1917. The missionaries seem to have understood that preaching of gospel at mission stations would not produce the desired result. Thus, they viewed the establishment of schools as a surest path to the success of their mission. This was at a time that Ilorin Emirate authority needed a Western school. It requested for more government schools in Ilorin. Between 1917 and 1959, ten primary schools and a secondary school were established by Christian missionaries. However, the Emirate authority was quick to understand the tricks of the Christian missionaries; thus, the Christian missionary schools were shunned, and converts could not be made from among the Ilorin.

Ilorin is a cosmopolitan city inhabited by different peoples who have fused to become Ilorin with a distinct culture, tradition and language. Thus, Ilorin is neither north nor south, neither Hausa nor Yoruba; rather, it is an independent geographical entity with a distinct history and culture. It, however, has religious and political alignments with the North. This unique feature of the Emirate, in our view,

should be a sign of strength, as the resources of the many social and ethnic groups that have formed Ilorin are there to be exploited for the benefit of the Ilorin people, irrespective of the places they might have migrated from. We should focus on what unites us by maximizing the locational advantage which nature has freely conferred on the Emirate. The potentials of Ilorin and its people are indeed very great.

Ilorin was derived from Ilu-Erin, meaning the town of elephants. This tradition states the founder of Ilorin was a certain Ayinla from Oyo-Ile (perhaps the same Ojo) and that he sojourned in Ilorin to hunt elephants. This tradition became popular when, in 1824, an elephant was killed on the outskirts of Ilorin at a place called Oko-Erin. Commenting on this, Jimoh (1994) believes that killing of an elephant is not sufficient evidence to justify the claim that the word Ilorin was a derivation of Ilu-Erin; rather, Ilorin was derived from Ilo-Irin just as Osogbo was derived from Oso-Igbo.

In addition, although the killing of an elephant on the outskirts of the town, to some extent, erases the doubt as to whether elephants existed in the area, it raises more questions than answers. For instance, no information was given about the hunting prowess of Ojo Isekuse or Ayinla, who is claimed to have come to Ilorin to hunt for elephants, either in the history of Ilorin or that of old Oyo. Even if we assume that he was a great hunter of elephants, could he have been the only one interested in hunting at Ilorin? That not many hunters hunt (or hunted) for elephants at Ilorin could be suggestive of the fact that the elephants were not in large number in Ilorin, and as such, the term could not have attracted a popular usage. This perhaps made some scholars believe that the only elephant killed in 1824 must have strayed into Ilorin. The tradition of elephant hunting is not likely to be the origin of the term Ilorin, because the killing of the elephant happened long after the establishment of the town and, indeed, the emirate system in Ilorin.

However, it is important to also stress that the mere presence of the much-talked-about rock at Bamidele compound in Ilorin, on which the hunting implements were said to have been sharpened is not sufficient evidence to hold tenaciously to the idea that the origin

of the name 'Ilorin' is linked to *Ilo-Irin*, the sharpening of iron. Many things need clarification. For instance, we do not know how many hunters were within the area and population in general, that could have warranted the popular usage of the word *Ilo-Irin*. Nor is there any evidence to show that within the time Ojo was in Ilorin, he took to the profession of sharpening iron, which might have eventually made the term *Ilo-Irin* popular (Ibrahim, 2002: 12).

Apart from Ojo who claimed to have sharpened his iron implements on the rock, there is no record of any other hunter who came to that place for that purpose, which perhaps might have popularized the usage of the term *Ilo-Irin*. It may not be out of place to suggest that the word Ilo-Irin might be a derivation from one the Baruba word *Ironi*, that is, alligator pepper, which is indispensable among the Baruba people for use as warriors and charm makers.

It must also be noted that there were other rocks and rocky places and hills in and around Ilorin, and beyond, where such activities could also have taken place. What then could have made the rock in the Bamidele compound unique and popular over and above others? The pre-eighteenth century history of Ilorin is like a jig-saw puzzle with many of its parts missing. To adequately reconstruct her history, archaeologists, linguists, anthropologists and other researchers need to lend a helping hand in enriching our knowledge son the history of Ilorin to avoid over-dependence on inadequate sources.

These situations and others relating to inadequacy of information might have compelled Johnson to conclude that Laderin, the grandfather of Afonja, was the builder of Ilorin as a Yoruba settlement. But records have it that in the early part of the 18th century Laderin became a noticeable personality in Ilorin, thus, he could not have been the builder of Ilorin. After his death, Pasin, the son of Laderin was said to have openly and courageously challenged Bashorun Ga'a (1754-1774) for being despotic in the administration of Oyo Empire. Pasin was, however, killed by men of Ga'a who pursued him to Olla where he was granted refuge. The position of Baale Ilorin allegedly occupied by Laderin as a chief in the Oyo Empire was said to have been successively occupied by Pasin and Alagbin and Afonja, who were his descendants. Afonja rose from

Baaleship to the exalted position of Aare-Onakakanfo (commander-in-chief of the army) of the Oyo Empire during the reign of Alaafin.

Afonja and the assorted groups for whom he provided leadership were located at Idi-Ape quarter. The earliest Muslim group was located at Okesuna, which was a ribat under the leadership of Al-Tahir, nick-named Solagberu. The origin of Solagberu is disputed. According to Jimoh (1984), he was a Beri-Beri man, while Johnson reports that he was a Yoruba man. However, judging from the Islamic name (al-Tahir), Solagberu was likely a Beri-Beri man. His long stay in Ilorin and close interaction with the Yoruba, as well as his popular Yoruba name (Solagberu) must have informed the confusion. The settlement is believed to have been founded in the 17th century, before the arrival of Solagberu that provided leadership. The leadership must have been conceded to him for his piety and erudition. A certain Ela who succeeded Ojo Isekuse, was said to be the leader of the Yoruba at Okelele. Usman Olufadi inherited the leadership of the pastoral Fulani while Bako was the head of the Hausa at Gambari (Ibrahim, 2002: 12).

The different groups at this time lived independently of one another. The leaders of the different groups governed their subjects without recourse to one another. However, there is evidence which suggests economic and social interdependence among the different groups. For instance, as we have noted, the presence of Afonja in Ilorin as a generalissimo no doubt strengthened the security in Ilorin, thereby bringing about relative peace and harmonious coexistence. Solagberu, the Muslim leader of Okesunna, was said to have assisted Afonja, the Aare Onakakanfo, in the making of charms. Furthermore, as Ilorin was an 'entrepot' through which the trans-Sahara trade route passed to Oyo, the different groups must have interacted economically. The men of Solagberu were said to have militarily assisted Afonja in his earliest military expeditions. Danmole (1980) is of the opinion that the proximity of the settlements of the Fulani and the Hausa is suggestive of close interaction as opposed to the total independence of the different quarters presumed today. The above claim is corroborated by Jimoh (1994) who refers to the settlement as semi-autonomous.

Ilorin, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, was largely populated by adherents of African Traditional Religions. This can be substantiated by the assertion that Sheikh Alimi could not remain in Ilorin on his first visit, because it was a land full of idolaters. Like other African Traditional Religionists, the people must have believed in the existence of the supernatural being (God) who created them and things in their surroundings. They believed that He watched over their activities, and rewarded or punished them as the case may be. Thus, they evolved means of approaching, worshiping and appeasing Him.

Consequently, some took to worshipping objects of nature like the Asa River, the Sobi Hill Mountains and rocks, baobab trees, land and forest and other such physical phenomena. They also worshipped ancestors and deified them. There were the Egungun and Igunnu masquerades too. Some professionals worshipped gods that were spiritually conceived as having a connection to devotees' occupations. For instance, most farmers worshipped the goddess of land and fertility (land, river); the hunters worshipped the god of iron (Ogun), just as did the blacksmiths. There were also Spirit (Oro) worshippers who worshipped the spirit of twins, triplets, etc.

Traditional worshippers worshipped primarily to appease gods, so that they might escape their wraths, which came in the form of droughts, sudden deaths, illnesses, etc. With time, worshiper's needs included security of their territories from enemies and other calamities, safety of lives and property, victory at wars and peaceful co-existence in the society. The objectives of worshipping the gods by the adherents of African Traditional Religion include to seek from the provision and protection of wives, children and riches, attainment of progress for the community and the individuals, in business and in other endeavours. With expectation that their wishes would be answered, strict discipline was maintained among the people of the society, to avoid incurring the wrath of the gods. Some taboos were woven around the gods and goddesses to inculcate the spirit of oneness and more importantly, morality and respect in the youth. It is astonishing to note that sacrifice of all kinds relating to traditional

worship are still observed at remote road junctions, outskirts of the town, along farm routes and on farmlands (Ibrahim, 2002: 12).

Metropolis

A metropolis is a large city or conurbation, which is a significant economic, political and cultural centre for a country or region and an important hub for regional or international connections, commerce, and communications. The term is Greek and means the "mother city" of a colony (in the ancient sense). That is, the city which sends out settlers. This was later generalized to a city regarded as a centre of a specified activity, or any large, important city in a nation (Ecclesiastic Database online, 2019).

Ecclesiastical Status of Clergy at *Ori-Oke*

The mountains prayer *Ori-Oke* have become ministry that defies simple academic definition. The ministry continues to be a phenomenon attracting the attentions of anthropologists, missiologists and sociologists that see them as sources for understanding aspects of Christian aberrations from indigenous perspectives.

Ori-Oke caters to Africans' beliefs in witchcraft, sorcery and other malevolent spirits that the mission Churches do not believe as a reality. These churches speak to the fears and trials of Africans by providing protection from such evil forces. They are more interested in the practical realization of the terminology and ideology of the Christian faith. Victor Hayward admonished that even though the African worldviews present intellectual difficulties, mission churches need to take them seriously in Christian practice (Aiyegboyin, 1979).

Many Africans prefer the lovelier forms of worship of these sects. The frequent repetition of songs and choruses accompanied with the hand clapping, tapping of feet and swaying of body are part of the average African emotional response to the Ultimate Being. This, of course, has to do with the fact that the literacy level of most of the patrons is low, making it difficult for them to be able to read effectively from Hymnals used by the historic churches. This is

coupled with the use of indigenous lyrics and instruments that make people enjoy their worship. The patrons do not feel at home in the type of worship that has been described as 'uninterestingly European and dull,' which is characteristic of the historic churches.

Much emphasis is placed on the role of the Holy Spirit in the various ministries of these churches. While much depends on the ingenuity of the leaders, they still refer to the Holy Spirit as the source of their gifts of vision, prophetic utterance and healing. The Holy Spirit is not an academic subject to be debated, but a being to be experienced by the leaders and the followers. A re-enactment of the activities of the Holy Spirit in the Acts is the norms for most of these churches and their leaders. In some cases, there may be 'heresies' on the subject of the Holy Spirit, yet He is still recognized as the power behind their activities (Aiyegboyin, 1979).

It is also to their discredit that church discipline is all but absent in most of these *Ori-Oke*. This may be part of the reasons for the increasing sessions. Their regulations consist merely in the prohibitions generally taught within the group, and offences are determined as they arise. Because some of them fear the loss of some of their members, they hardly carry out biblical injunctions to severely punish some offending members. Consequently, they allow members who are loosely related with the church, but who are just interested in their 'efficacious prayers' for their life crises.

It is general knowledge that some of these churches have gone to the extent of idolizing their leaders. The case of Simon Kimbangu is somewhat unfortunate as he would not have endorsed anyone idolizing him. However, some of the leaders have arrogated to themselves powers, authorities and titles that have no biblical support. Some have, as a result of personal weaknesses, engaged in practices that their members have imbibed, even when such practices are known to be 'unchristian.' Also, as Hayward observed, 'organizations built around an individual inevitably face a fundamental crisis on the death of such leaders.' Succession after the death of some leaders has often led to multiple secessions, hostilities and litigation. Personality cult is the bane of most of the *Ori-Oke*. Such powerful figures often enrich themselves at the expense of the

faithfulness of their followers, who may lose almost everything at the exit or death of their idol-leaders (Aiyegboyin, 1979).

Most of these churches do not receive regular subscriptions. In practice, therefore, they have to depend upon irregular voluntary gifts from members, usually made as thank offerings for blessings received or expected. They also rely upon income derived from special occasions such as harvest, thanksgiving, silver collections and anniversary celebrations.

Researchers have shown that several of the leaders of the *Ori-Oke* have no Biblical or theological training whatsoever. One of the serious effects of this is that their teaching or preaching is often low standard, and sermons show little or absolutely no sign of careful preparation. The result of this is that some of these churches engage in practices which are not biblical. Some practices are bordering on renewal of ancestral cults and rituals, traditional divination through objects, pronouncing curses and laying of spells, consultation of spirits and other practices which are condemned in the Bible. Some have already started some formal training of their leaders, but it is simplistic. The training sometimes lasts a few weeks under teachers who themselves have no formal theological training.

As stated above, attempts by *Ori-Oke* leaders to satisfy or minister to Africans have led some of them to the extreme end of adding extra-biblical modes to their worship and ministry. Fernandez is of the opinion that some of these churches make frequent use of images. The syncretism is more obvious in some of the offshoots of the original groups that came out of the mission-related churches. There are information or testimonies by defected members of CCC, C&S, among others, to the effect that some leaders of some of these churches within the *Ori-Oke* have alliances with witches and wizards. They engage in spiritism and occultism in order to achieve their desired goals. The ritual baptism at the crossroads, seashores, and in the middle of the night, the prescriptions of herbal items, such as "holy-water," candles, animal sacrifices among others are indicative of their syncretism (Aiyegboyin, 1979).

In most of the *Ori-Oke*, hardly can anyone find cumbersome administrative set-up. The so-called headquarters of any of the *Ori-*

Oke may be the house where the leader or the overseer lives. Decisions affecting the congregations scattered all over a country are taken by the leaders and carried out by the followers. Pastors are placed and removed by the same leader without any questions. In most cases, red-tapism or committee systems in mainline denominations are not a problem, thus decisions are easily carried out. However, the simple administrative structure paves way for greater confusion and easy disintegration after the demise of the leaders.

One of the recurrent problems with the leaders of the *Ori-Oke* is the issue of polygamy. Most of the leaders seem to "enjoy" keeping harem of women as wives, plus others who simply served as mistresses. It can be argued that since it is common for African men to marry more than one woman, they are not immune; yet, there are more African men who marry only once. In other words, they can be said to be lenient towards African traditional marriage, or that they simply used such form of marriage as a form of reaction to the mission churches' policies towards polygamy. Prophet Harris had his four wives accompanying him in his evangelistic trips. Isaiah Shembe of South Africa had four wives, but divorced all of them before he resumed his prophetic ministry. Oshitelu of the *Aladura* married seven, while Johane Maranke "left sixteen wives on his death in 1963." There are others, such as Simon Kimbangu, who married only once, though he could have fallen prey to the same problem but for the early interruption in his ministry. The Kimbanguist Church, however, in 1958 prohibited polygamy in their constitution.

The problem involved here may be due to the *Ori-Oke* leaders' style of pastoral ministry where women with problems are asked to come under their 'spiritual watch-care.' It is probably during the 'counselling sessions' and several days of 'prayer vigils' that they are tempted to engage in extra-marital affairs. Women with emotional and psychological problems are mostly affected.

Some of the *Ori-Oke* women leaders are also affected by this problem, as some of them 'change' their men from time to time. It is our considered opinion that if the *Ori-Oke* leaders interact with other church leaders, and are open to accountability in relation to the

biblical standard for church leadership, this problem may be solved or checked (Aiyegboyin, 1979).

What exactly will happen to these groups in Africa with increasing development, industrialization and education? Will what happened to religious movements in Europe in the Middle Ages, and in the 18th century, when with the rise of scientific knowledge and financial security of individuals, religious fervour declined?

While there is no doubt about many problems confronting the *Ori-Oke*, the movement has come to stay, in spite of the weaknesses. In the first place, the movement is a wake-up call for the mission-related churches saying that all is not well with their method of ministry. We should remember that most of the members of *Ori-Oke* are drawn from the mainline denominations. It is amazing that it took the Kimbanguist churches only a few years to reach the greater part of Central Africa with the Gospel, compared to the many years of the mission-related churches' endeavours.

It is important to consider the fact that the *Ori-Oke* movement did not emerge in a historical and social vacuum. The contributions of Henry Venn through his 'Mission Principle' helped to pave the way for thoughts of independence. He had argued in 1846 that indigenous leadership was basic to the growth of the church in Africa. Henry Venn no doubt awakened the idea of indigenization. The unfortunate consequences was the misunderstanding of Venn's colleagues of the idea, thus leading many of them to resent or malign any African that exhibited signs of leadership. The cases of Bishop Ajayi Crowther and Ladejo stone (his group broke away in 1888 from FBC, Lagos) are good examples both of Anglican and Baptist traditions.

The above mentioned churches would not have been established but for the arrogant attitude of some of the missionaries who resented the idea of African leadership. The ethnocentrism of the then-missionaries contributed immensely to the emergence of indigenous churches. The irony of this development is the fact that most of the African leaders continue to exhibit the same intolerance to new leaders within their organizations. Many such prospective leaders are side-lined and frustrated out. They then are forced to

begin their own churches, thus fuelling the boost of proliferation of indigenous churches. The fragmentation can be repeated in any organization that discourages prospective leaders or muzzles the gifts of God in some individuals.

One key phenomenon of *Ori-Oke* is the mass movement led or started by a charismatic figure. Many of these leaders were original members of some mainline denomination; thus many of them never had the intention to establish new churches or denominations. They started, to some extent, renewal movements. These prophetic figures organized evangelistic crusades in various localities, but due to lack of support and tolerance by the historic churches, such leaders had no choice but to organize their followers into churches led by their disciples. Among these are Garrick Braid from Niger Delta in Nigeria; William Wade Harris, a Kru from Liberia; Walter Matiffa from Lesotho; Simon Kimbangu from Belgian Congo; and Samson Oppong from Ghana (Aiyegboyin, 1979).

Conclusion

We have been able to analyse the view of scholars on the status of clergy and its implication on the worshippers. We conclude that some clergy in charge of *Ori-Oke* are truly called, but not theologically sound. Adversely, this affects the worshippers in the sense that, raw-messages, half-baked messages and wrong interpretations of the Scriptures are given to them. It is understood that divine inspiration is there to help them. Notwithstanding, the inspiration becomes more active when we study the Scriptures very well. One doesn't give what he has not; there is a need for some of them to receive theological training for adequate training on the Scripture. The societal claim is that the biblical training of the clergy at *Ori-Oke* gives them the impetus to suppress and treat laity with spite and levity. This study has examined problems and challenges of some of the clergy on Ecclesiastical status. Findings from the study show that God did not prevent any clergy from attending the theological school, dressing well and being morally sound in their calling.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are given, based on the finding from the study:

- Ecclesiastical status of clergy in any *Ori-Oke* must be up to the standard.
- Clergy should have sound training from standard theological institutions.
- Leaders of these *Ori-Oke* should champion the cause of development through a more committed and in-depth study of the Bible, to harness hidden treasures in the Bible that can advance the prayer in *Ori-Oke*.
- Clergy should not operate at *Ori-Oke* to extort money from the members.
- Anything diabolical must not be mentioned, even less practiced among clergy.

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Chapter 16

Ori-oke and Christian Values: The Panacea for Social Change and Development in Nigeria

Osaji Olasupo Jacob

Abstract

Ori-Oke is notably known as a higher place; a place above all other levels physically. Spiritually too, one expects to see a level of sound moral and ethical values or spirituality from somebody staying and pleading for himself, or interceding for others at Ori-Oke (Prayer Mountain). The standard of Christian and ethical values expected of one ascending and descending from Ori-Oke should be the type that complied with the biblical standard, in that the Bible is the primary guide to what is ethical and moral. The Bible should be seen as the major or the only source of knowledge of what is right and wrong. Attending Ori-Oke coupled with Christian values of peace, justice, hard work, love for God, love for humanity, love for others as you love yourself, and loving our nation genuinely, are the fundamentals for achieving right human behaviour which can lead to a genuine social change Nigerians are craving for. That will also bring to our homes a desired development that would bring food, peace, security and justice to Nigeria. This paper examines Ori-Oke, the right attitude to God, man, and the fear of God that can enhance sustainability and development in our nation.

Introduction

To attain a sustainable and desired human development through the function of *Ori-Oke* Praying Mountain, there is a need to consider the influence of Christian ethical values, the right attitude to God, humanity and our nation Nigeria. Our wrong attitudes negate the biblical principles which can influence and bring about the social change we are looking forward to achieve in this nation.

It is important to know what actually constitutes or makes prayers acceptable unto God, or what irritates God about our petitions. If our behaviour does not show any act of love for God, humanity or our nation, our going to *Ori-Oke* for prayer will only amount to a waste of time, resources and energy. The Bible makes it clear that, if you bring anything to God's altar and remember you have a grudge or misunderstanding against your brother or neighbour, go back and settle with your brother or neighbour before coming back to offer your petition (Matt 5).

A person going to *Ori-Oke* to pray and who does not have the fear of God, or respect for humanity, but who only love money, use other human being as rituals for money, power, position, and yet sleeps on the top of the mountains for days, or months amount to nothing to God, but a sheer waste of energy and resources. (Olajide, 2016). *Ori-Oke* Prayer Mountain is considered to be a holy place, a place to meet with God in prayers, to thank Him (God), seek for repentance, to intercede for others and our nation. Our Christian ethical values will be pillars to uphold our prayer before the righteous and only God. The Bible declares in Psalm (24: 3, 4) "Who shall ascend unto the only hills (Mountain) of God, is he that has the holy hands, heart and fear God. One who allows justice to pervade his life" The paper considers *Ori-Oke*, and Christian ethical as factors that will culminate in the social change and development Nigeria is clamouring for.

The Biblical Concept of *Ori-Oke*

Ori-Oke, Prayer Mountain has been the prayer pattern and spiritual experiences for ages. Mountains play a starring role in the many of the orphany stories in the Bible. Almost from the beginning of the Bible, mountains are sites of transcendent spiritual experiences, encounters with God or appearances of God. Noah's ark settled on a mountain top when the floodwaters receded, and after Noah offered to God a sacrifice there, the Creator made a new covenant with creatures, promising never to bring such destruction against the world again (Gen 8: 4, 20-22). Ezekiel 28: 13-15 places

the Garden of Eden on a mountain. Abraham shows his willingness to sacrifice Isaac and he encounters God on a mountain (Gen 22-: 1-14). God appears to Moses and speaks from the burning bush on "Horeb, the mountain of God" (Ex. 3: 1-2), and there, he received the call of God to go and deliver the people of Israel from the land of bondage; God encounters Elijah on the same site (I Kings 29: 8-18). Most impressive of all is the experience of the Israelites at Mt. Sinai (Ex 19), where Moses ascends in a cloud to meet God.

The New Testament records say: Jesus went to a mountain to pray on several occasions. Matthew 14: 23 tells us,

> And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. We also read in Luke 6: 12, and in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

The questions now are: Is there any spiritual significance in going to a mountain to pray? Does God hear us better from the mountain top? To answer these questions, we want to examine some instances both from Old and New Testaments to establish the truth about *Ori-Oke* from the biblical perspective.

Mountains are mentioned frequently in the Bible because mountains dotted the landscape of biblical regions. In other words, while mountains have a significant symbolic value in the Bible, mountains and hills are mentioned as parts of the physical reality of the Bible. As a result, mountains and hills are mentioned over 500 times in the Bible. Mountains have a logical religious symbolism for biblical cultures, since they are "close to God" who was believed to dwell in the heavens (as in the sky). As a result, God often reveals himself on the mountain top.

In the Old Testament, the mountains of Sinai and Zion are most significant. Mount Sinai, is a symbol of God's Covenant with Israel. Mt. Sinai occupies an important place in human society, as well as in the history of God's people. Most significantly, it was the place where God appeared in person to Moses, and gave him the Law, Ten Commandments. Earlier, at the end of Moses' 40-years exile in

Midian, God appeared to him in a burning bush at the base of the Mountain of God, and called him to return to Egypt to lead the Israelites to freedom (Ex 3: 1 – 4: 17). When the Israelites first arrived at Mt. Sinai, Moses struck a rock at Horeb to provide water for the multitude (Ex 17: 6). They spent 11 months at the Holy Mountain, before breaking camp and moving on to Kadesh Barnea. After arriving at Mt. Sinai, Moses went up to God, as well as instructed on the construction of the Tabernacle (Ex 19-31).

When the Israelites left Mt. Sinai, God's presence went with them and the mountain was no longer a significant religious centre. Mt. Sinai appeared in recorded Biblical history only one more time. Nearly six centuries after the Israelites left Mt. Sinai, Elijah fled to "Horeb, he Mountain of God" to escape from the wrath of Queen Jezebel, following his encounter with the priests of Baal at Mt Camel (I Kings 19: 1-21). Some 63 chapters of the Old Testament are devoted to events that took place at Mt. Sinai. This amounts to 14 percent of the 436 historical narrative chapters from Genesis to Esther. After Elijah's visit, Mt. Sinai dropped out of Biblical history, and its location faded from the remembrance of God's people. "The Mountain of God" is the name used for Mt. Sinai in the burning bush account (Ex 3: 1), the meeting place of Moses and Aaron (Ex 4: 27), the location where Jethro visited Moses (Ex 18: 5) and Elijah's hiding place (I kings 19: 8).

Mount Zion, to the south, is the location of the Jerusalem Temple. In the New Testament. Jesus appoints the twelve disciples on a mountain. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus delivers the *Beatitudes* on the Mount, conjuring an image of Moses who received the commandments on Mount Sinai. Besides, it was on the Mountain that Jesus resisted Satan's temptation (Matthew 4: 8, Luke 4: 5). He was also transfigured on the Mountain (Matt 17: 1-8; Mark 9: 2-8; Luke 9: 28-36); it was on mountains that Jesus found himself close to the father (Matt 14: 23). Finally, at the gospel's conclusions (Matt 18: 16), the disciples were beckoned to meet for the last time with the risen Jesus, upon a Mountain in Galilee, and Jesus ascended into Heavens from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1: 10-12).

The Lord, going into the Mountain, shows us the importance of finding time apart from all distractions to pray, and the importance of solitude when we are engaged in earnest prayers and supplication. We can observe that being alone in the silence of the evening, the Lord Jesus was able to enjoy the time of uninterrupted communion with His father. In Luke 6: 12, we read that the Lord "continued all nights in prayer". In the Matthean perspective, it is when Jesus is "on the Mountain" that the significance and the nature of his mission are most clearly seen. Consequently, it can be said that Mountains in Matthew functions not primarily as places of revelation or isolation, but as eschatological sites, where Jesus enters into the full authority of the Sonship, where the eschatological community is gathered, and where the age of fulfilment is inaugurated.

According to Reverend James Akinadewo (2016) of Motailatu Church of God, Lagos District Headquarters, Okeira, Ogba, Lagos State, "Prayer is communication between you and God. People go to Prayer Mountains to avoid distraction. It is like being alone with God. Jesus Christ took three of his disciples to the mountain during the transfiguration, and he taught them and prayed with them there. In the Bible, as well, Moses communicated with God on the mountain where he received the Ten Commandments." Prophet Moses Aladeolu, Founder, CAC, *Ori-Oke* Aanu, also supports Reverend Akinadewo's view of the example of Moses, stating that "the practice of praying on mountains has its origin in the Bible, and offers many spiritual benefits for those who understand its importance."

Praying on mountains helps a person's focus, unlike what obtains when there is a crowd. Also speaking with the *Tribune* Church, Prelate, Methodist Church Nigeria, Most Reverend S.C.K. Uche, who spoke on the peculiarities of Prayer Mountains, and why Methodists may not practice such, stated that

The prayer of faith is most effective, but that is not to say that mountains are useless. If you want serenity or calmness, if you want a place that is very quiet, you can go to any mountain to pray. It does not mean that if one is a sinner and you go to a mountain God will not answer. What matters most is the heart from which you pray. If

one prays to God anywhere with a clean heart and with strong faith, the prayer will be heard.

Ori-Oke and its Peculiarities

According to some clerics and worshippers who spoke with me, Prayer Mountains are open to all people, depending, however, on what the rules of the mountain specify (Adeleke and Oluyori 2016). According to Prophet Michael Olubode "the Lord gives us freedom to pray anywhere, whether on the mountain, inside your house, while bathing, eating, on your bed, anywhere. Prayer Mountains could be said to be special because of the inspiration people draw from such environments. According to Daramola and Julius "When the Celestial Church of Christ started, they were known for praying on beaches. However, the CAC and some other denominations are known for going to Prayer Mountains. If you know you can get inspired there, why not? Daramol and Dadeola (2016). There are three issues that make a Prayer Mountain peculiar. Firstly, since the Prayer Mountain is not a church, it is expected that the place should have a leader. Secondly, "there should be rules that will guide the activities that take place there, also, the Prayer Mountain should be multi-denominational, that is, open to people of many denominations" Oluyori and Ogunyemi (2016). Also speaking on the activities that occur on Prayer Mountains, a cleric of the CAC, Pastor Olu Makinwa, said:

> People have testified to the miracles they have received as a result of spending time on the Prayer Mountains. All CAC Prayer Mountains welcome everybody, irrespective of denomination or religion, provided the individual is ready to follow the CAC rules, which include no burning of candles; no bathing of anybody on the mountain; no laying with your spouse on the mountain. It is also against the rules to pay for prayers on the mountain. Makinwa and Bewaji (2016).

At one of the mountains visited, cars of various types were parked along the foot of the mountain. There was a security guard at

a makeshift shelter, at the entrance to the mountain who inquired from new faces what their business at the mountain was.

Prayer Mountains, contrary to assumptions, are not all gloom. Business activities also take place, such as sale of cooked food, snacks, bread, sweets, among others. However, these activities are restricted to outside the premises of the holy ground. According to Pastor Makinwa. "In recent times, more Prayer Mountains are springing up. In fact, on some Prayer Mountains, all sorts of things find their way into these places. There are stories of Prayer Mountains where people schedule amorous affairs. You hear of people fixing sexual escapades to take place on Prayer Mountains. Makinwa (2016) Crimes are often committed, and all vices and activities of such are reportedly carried out on some Prayer Mountains.

"A Prayer Mountain is a place of holiness. The prophet in charge of the mountain must also be genuinely called by God. For example, *at Ori-Oke* Baba Abiye Ede, founded by Baba Akande, who had an eyesight challenge, one would know that he was genuinely called by God. Only the Bible is the possession allowed on that mountain. In fact, eating isn't allowed. It is strictly for prayers." he stated. Akande (2016) *Ori-Oke* Babalola in Odo-Owa is another Prayer Mountain with holy activities and decent environment; Knowing fully the founder late Ayodele Babalola, a prophet of decent character and behaviour. At Efon Alaye where he was called and started his ministry, the *Ori-Oke* where he often stay to pray was acclaimed by some members of the community as a mountain where God personally resides. People go there to pray, and get answers to their prayers. The stream or river that he (Babalola) sanctified and dedicated, where many were healed at Ikeji-Arakeji, is being preserved till today. At the first CAC University (JABU) Ikeji-Arakeji, people come there from all parts of Nigeria to pray for healing and to fetch water from the stream to take to their homes and destinations for healing.

Christian Values

A brief definition of Christian Ethics: (1) A system of values based upon the Christian Scriptures, (2) principles of behaviour in accordance with the behaviours of Christian prophets, (3) standards of thought and behaviour as taught by Jesus. It is, therefore, the belief that the Christian Bible is the primary guide to what is ethical and moral. A standard among many Christians is the belief that the Bible's books were inspired by God, and thus the Bible is the major, or only source of knowledge of what is right and wrong. The ethics themselves are those derived by interpretations of the behaviours of individuals in Bible stories, and not from the Bible stating specifically what is ethical. There is no known mention of ethic, ethics, ethical, moral, morals, or morality in the Bible. However there exists the Greek "ethos" as "customs" in Luke 1: 9 equally regarded to according to the custom of the priest's office. Perry (1926-116)

Generally, in Christianity, the behaviours and teachings of individuals in the Bible stories are subjectively interpreted as good or bad-or the stories are said to be holy or evil within the eyes of God, which then leads the reader to conclude which specific acts are deemed right or wrong - and then the interpretations of the good are referred to as *ethical* and those that are bad as *unethical*. Christian ethics is a branch of Christian theology that defines virtuous behaviour and wrong behaviour from a Christian perspective. Systematic theological study of Christian ethics is called moral theology (Perry, 1926: 116).

Christian virtues are often divided into three theological ethics. Christian include questions regarding how the rich should act toward the poor, how women are to be treated, and the morality of war. Christian ethicists, like other ethicists, approach ethics from different frameworks and perspectives.

Historical Development of Christian Ethics

In the Wesleyan tradition, according to Weiner (2003: 61) Christian theology (and thus Christian ethics) are informed by four

distinguishable sources known as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. The four sources are (1) the Bible and the Christian tradition, (2) philosophical principles and methods, (3) science and other sources of knowledge about the world, and (4) human experience broadly conceived. According to Long (2001: 2), Jewish ethics and the life of Jesus feature prominently in Christian ethics, The Bible is the universal and fundamental source of specifically *Christian* ethics", Long(2001-50) also claims "Christian ethics finds its source in diverse means, but it primarily emerges from the biblical narrative.". Long (2001-50) Childress and Macquarrie state that "Many Christian ethicists have claimed that Jesus Christ is the centre of the biblical message in its entirety and the key to scripture" Other Christian ethicists "prefer a more Trinitarian rendering of the message of scripture". Some modern Christians "understand 'liberation' or deliverance from oppression to be the message of scripture". Aiyegboyin. (2010) Although Christians today do not feel compelled to the whole of the Old Testament Law, the Ten Commandments often show up prominently in Christian ethics. Bernbaun, (2016) Much of Christian ethics derives from Biblical scripture; and Christians have always considered the Bible, profitable to teach, reprove, correct, and train in righteousness. The New Testament generally entails that all morality flows from the Great Commandment, to love God with all one's heart, mind, strength, and soul, and to love one's neighbour as oneself. In this, Jesus was reaffirming a teachings of Deut 6: 4-9 and Lev 19: 18. Christ united these commands together and proposed himself as a model of the love required in John 13: 12, known also as The New Commandment. Christian ethics developed during early Christianity, as Christianity arose in the Holy Land and other early centres of Christianity, while Christianity emerged from Second Temple Judaism. Consequently, early Christian ethics included discussions of how believers should relate to Roman authority and to the empire (Bernbaun, (2006-307-309).

The Church Fathers had little occasion to treat moral questions from a purely philosophical standpoint and independently of divine revelation, but in the explanation of Christian doctrine, their

discussions naturally led to philosophical investigations. Writers, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine of Hippo all wrote on ethics from a distinctly Christian point of view (IsicheI, (1995.75). They made use of philosophical and ethical principles laid down by their Greek philosopher forbears and the intersection of Greek and Jewish thought known as Hellenistic Judaism. Under the Emperor Constantine I (312–337), Christianity became a legal religion. With Christianity now in power, ethical concerns broadened and included discussions of the proper role of the state. Augustine, in particular, made use of the ethical principles of Greek philosophy and Hellenistic Judaism (IsicheI 1995-80). He proceeded to develop thoroughly along philosophical lines and to establish firmly most of the truths of Christian morality- the eternal law (*lex aeterna*), the original type and source of all temporal laws, the natural law, conscience, the ultimate end of man, the cardinal virtues, sin, marriage, etc. were treated by him in the clearest and most penetrating manner. Therefore, *Ori-Oke* on its own, can not avail us the presence of God, not to talk of getting God's attention unto our petition without the adequate complimentary efforts of ethical values. Augustine identified a movement in Scripture, "toward the 'City of God', from which Christian ethics emerges", as illustrated in chapters 11 and 12 of the book of Genesis Burleigh (2001-67). Broadly speaking, Augustine adapted the philosophy of Plato to Christian principles. His synthesis is called Augustinianism (alternatively, Augustinism)

Social Change

Social change refers to an alteration in the social order of a society. Social change may include changes in nature, social institutions, social behaviours, or social relations. The term social change is used to indicate the changes that take place in human interactions and interrelations. Society is a web of social relationships, and hence, social change means change in the system of social relationships. These are understood in terms of social processes

interactions and organization Wilson (2001-105). Social change can be positive or negative, as well. Auguste Comte, the father of Sociology has posed two problems - the question of social statics and the question of social dynamics, what it is and how it changes. The sociologists not only outline the structure of the society, but also seek to know its causes also Wilson (2001-115) According to Ginsberg, social change is a change in the social structure.

Social change may refer to the notion of social progress or sociocultural evolution, the philosophical idea that society moves forward by dialectical or evolutionary means. It may refer to a paradigm change in the socio-economic structure, for instance, a shift away from feudalism and towards capitalism (Wilson, 2001-120). Accordingly, it may also refer to social revolution, such as the Socialist revolution presented in Marxism, or in other social movements, such as Women's suffrage or the Civil rights movement. Social change may be driven by cultural, religious, economic, scientific or technological forces.

Ori-Oke (Prayer Mountain), operations bring a lot of social changes to many, in Nigeria today. Changes in the life style of the people going to *Ori-Oke*, environmental changes, physical and spiritual changes are some of the changes

Process of Social Change

The process of social change has four primary characteristics:

1. Social change happens all the time. Not every social change will be as dramatic as nature. One clear way in which we can see social change at the *Ori-Oke* is through technology. Brown P. (1973-121-145) Some of the *Ori-Oke* visited, now allow the use of various gadgets and musical instruments are being used for worship today, causing distractions and violation of the culture of quietness associated with *Ori-Oke*. Besides, some Church denominations employ the use of gospel musicians in their programs in order to attract crowd to visit their *Ori-Oke*.

2. Social change is sometimes intentional, but oftentimes unplanned. It is evident that, in some cases, the nature and order of operations of *Ori-Oke* have been altered. Many Prayer Mountains have being changed to religious worship centres, and not a place for personal communion with God. The business of the society which the visitors to *Ori-Oke* are trying to run away from, in order to have quiet time with God, has stylishly crept into the mountains systems or programmes today.

3. Social change is controversial. One only has to look at the various equal rights movements to see that social change, oftentimes, involves controversy. Some *Ori-Oke* do advertise their programs on radio and television for more people to attend, thereby turning *Ori-Oke* programs to business. However, some *Ori-Oke* do not subscribe to this, but still maintain the Biblical culture of *Ori-Oke*. They still adhere strictly to the dos and don'ts of their *Ori-Oke* as given by the Lord to the founders of such Prayer Mountains.

4. Some changes matter more than others. Another effect of social change on *Ori-Oke* today is the custom of building chalets, provision of infrastructures and some business activities that are taking place on *Ori-Oke,* such as, selling of food items, drinks, among others, all to make the mountain a convenient place for visitors. In the real sense of it, these are meant to enable some visitors who may want to spend more days on the mountain find it convenient and comfortable to stay. Besides, this has attracted some well-to-do visitors to the Mountain who cannot part away with convenience. And this has become a means of generating money for the smooth running of *Ori-Oke*. Meeting at *Ori-Oke* today is seen by many people as a means of socializing with different people, and establishing business relationship in the process of interaction after prayer time Brown P. (1973-121-145)

It is quite unfortunate that the authorities of some contemporary Ori Oke have turned the Prayer Mountains visitors to money-making-machine. From our interviews, we discovered that at every prayer session, the anchor of the programs would find a way of collecting offering from the people, using various gimmicks. However, giving offering to God after prayer session is indisputable

and unavoidable, but the way and manner this has been occurring at the *Ori-Oke* today is questionable. Most of these activities as discussed could be seen as impediment to the spirituality and sacredness of *Ori-Oke*. A Mountain Prayer is supposed to be an avenue for one to focus on God in a place, devoid of noise and crowd. Some Prayer Mountains have even become tourist centres as some people visit Ori Oke for non-spiritual purposes (1973-121-145).

Development

Development is a complex issue, with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. A basic perspective equates development with economic growth. The United Nations Development Programme uses a more detailed definition- according to them development is 'to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community Medina (2001) p.172-177. Achieving human development is linked to a third perspective of development, which views it as freeing people from obstacles that affect their ability to develop their own lives and communities. Development, therefore, is empowerment, it is about local people taking control of their own lives, expressing their own demands and finding their own solutions to their problems. For people to be able to get out or let loose from the trap of evil and be able to develop in life, they run to *Ori-Oke* for solutions. Development is 'Good change' according to Chambers (1997-75), but this is not as straightforward as it sounds. For example, who decides which change is good? Thomas (2000) [30] explains three ways the word 'development' is used. Development has a history of being linked with capitalism with 'Good Change' commonly associated with industrialisation and modernisation on the basis of free markets. Therefore, development is closely bound with ideologies and values which are linked with biblical ethic. Chamber C. (1997-85). Sometimes, Priests/Pastors leading in various *Ori-Oke* during prayer time, will ask the worshippers to cry aloud to the lord

if they want their problems to go. The loudness and seriousness they put into their prayers, determine a quick solution. Their own idea of development and change is to cry in a loud way to God for solving your problem. Development: "a specified state of growth or advancement; a new and advanced product or idea; an event constituting a new stage in a changing situation." (Oxforddicationaries.com).

Conclusion

It is obvious that the complementary efforts of Christian ethical values to *Ori-Oke* bring about the social change and development desired. *Ori-Oke* is not only for signs and wonders, but to keep away from busy and noisy environment with the determination of becoming more spiritual at the presence of God. It is, therefore, necessary to always be conscious of the culture of *Ori-Oke* (Silence), and not to allow social change to alter or take us away from it. For the fact that man and woman are social animals and change is also part of the order of the day. The social change being experienced on *Ori-Oke* today should be properly channelled through the biblical message. Social change that does not originate from biblical teachings will only bring about negative development (Crimes, and social vices). As experienced today in some *Ori-Oke* where evil deeds are been perpetuated due to lack of social change. Hence *Ori-Oke* without Christian ethics and values cannot bring about a desired spirituality and development.

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Chapter 17

Historical Perspectives of the Spiritual and Economic Potentials of *Ori-Oke* Basin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

Odeigah, Theresa Nfam

Abstract

Mountain prayers in recent years, has become responsible for the various religions dynamism existing in Nigeria, and this unparalleled dynamism is mostly associated with Christians. The spiritual vigour and vibrancy are mostly driven the mountain prayers. Mountain prayers have become a common phenomenon among the Christians in Ilorin, and since the establishment of mountain prayers, mountains have tuned to prayer cities besieged by all manner of people, as well as Christians from various denominations, seeking divine intervention and solutions to their problems. Prayer Mountains are usually open to all religious denominations, and are noted for deliverance, healing and miracles. Apart from the religious significance, a different dimension has been added to mountain prayers and this is the economic potential of mountain prayers. Prayer Mountains have turned into business centres, where shops are erected and products like water, provisions, candles, anointing oil and various other goods are sold. These economic activities have become prominent and an added value to Prayer Mountains. The methodology adopted in this study was historical because the primary and secondary tools of research were based on oral interviews and available written documents of the churches, respectively. The paper concludes that Ori-Oke Basin is of historic, spiritual and economic significance, because those who participated in Ori-Oke Basin prayers regularly found it beneficial in finding solutions to their life's intractable problems, and additionally, it has economically empowered some of the people.

Introduction

The concept of praying on designated Mountains in the world began in South Korea. Prayer Mountains are rooted in religions

monasticism and its monasteries, where people connect themselves solely to God. The modern practice of Prayer Mountains was born in South Korea, in the late 1800s, when the opposition from the state religions and philosophies namely Buddhism and Confucianism began. The opposition also from the invading Japanese forces that was fighting the Koreans, at that time, made Mountain Prayers imperative. South Koreans who resisted, were persecuted or even executed. In looking for solutions to the problems, some Christians decided to go to the mountains for prayers in the mornings and evenings, calling on God and interceding over their problems.

In Nigeria, the concept of the Prayer Mountain is mostly associated with the Western part of Nigeria, and it was Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola who founded the Christ Apostolic Church that began praying on the mountains in 1944, through the inspiration of the power of God. Due to the pioneering work of Late Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola, his great spirituality and several visits and dedicated prayers and ministrations on several mountains tops, these mountains have become sacred and are being visited till date. That was how praying on Mountains began to spread to other places in Nigeria. The Yoruba people of the South-Western part of Nigeria, like the ancient Jews in their primitive history and religious experiences attach great religious importance to many objects which they believe are divine. The mountain top is believed to be a sacred location which facilitates and guarantees nearness to God, divine attention and unhindered answers to prayers (Adeola, 2016). *Ori-Oke* Basin in Ilorin, the capital of Kwara-State, Nigeria, was established in 1980 and it was initially a place of worship for various churches in Ilorin as a result of the problems members faced at the Sobi Mountain in Ilorin. Most of the churches began to move to *Ori-Oke* Basin for prayers and vigils. The founder of Jehovah Jireh Christ Church was one of the early worshippers at Basin Mountain. Other churches like Ijo-Ikala Apostolic Church of Christ also used the mountain at the early stage before the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church, Ilorin, acquired the mountain. The *Ori-Oke* Basin eventually metamorphosed to the Mount Sinai as a result of the great influence of the Cherubim Seraphim Movement Church, Ilorin (Ige,

2017).

The History of Basin Mountain Prayer (Mount Sinai)

The name Mount Sinai was given to the mountain by the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church. Mount Sinai historically was a place to hear God's voice (Exodus 19v9); it was a place God appeared to Moses and said, "Behold, I come to you in thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever". Apostle David Bamidele Aliyu was the first indigene who was actively involved in using *Ori-Oke* Basin. He was a member of Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church Worldwide; he died as the Chairman, Maintenance and Development Committee of *Ori-Oke* Basin. After his death, Abioyi, became the Chairman, Maintenance and Development Committee of the *Ori-Oke* Basin. Ilorin has other mountains, but one of the most historic mountains is the *Ori-Oke* Basin. The mountain is located in Ilorin South Local Government area of Kwara State. The mountain is historic because, Ori-Oke Basin is presently owned by the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church. The land was bought in May 1993 with additional two plots acquired from Omoniyi Adeleke. The tenancy agreement was made on the 1st of February, 2012 between the general secretary of the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church, No 1, District headquarters Ilorin, Kwara state and Ibrahim Jaiyeola of Kulende area Ilorin (Abioye, 2017).

Following the use of mountains for prayers by the Christ Apostolic Church, many of the mountains are now being used for prayers by different religious groups and denominations (Adekeye, 2017). This has attracted many denominations and different churches, various people and various groups for prayers. The Prayer Mountain is seen as a Holy place where God expressly answers prayers. Individuals visit the mountains to offer prayers and make requests to God. At *Ori-Oke* Basin, Christians go for spiritual incubation and special prayers. In all these, Prayer Mountains have also become a place of economic activities where Christians and other believers transact business around the mountain. Some of the

items sold around Prayer Mountains are anointing oil, sachet and bottle water and candles. These are items that are mostly used during prayers on the mountain. These items when specifically blessed and prayed on during the mountain prayers, become sources of receiving divine healing, deliverance and miracles. Prayer Mountains were in recent times, greatly popularized by the new generation churches across Kwara State.

Spiritual Implications of *Ori-Oke* Basin

Prayer Mountains are places where people go to renew their spiritual state and communion with God, and that enables them to concentrate and experience miracles without distraction. Prayer Mountains provide a good environment for spiritual communion and also offer spiritual sanctuary for those who ordinarily would not go to church. *Ori-Oke* Basin is one of the most popular Prayer Mountains in Ilorin, because it attracts different individuals and people of diverse religions, social class and ethnicity for prayers seeking divine solutions for various problems of life. At *Ori-Oke* Basin, several pastors have been known to spend days praying and fasting in preparation for major ministrations, intercessions or crusades in their various churches, or when they had to minister in other churches on invitation. Because God spoke with Moses on the mountain, people see praying on the mountain as the most effective way of having solutions to life's challenges. The *Ori-Oke* Basin Mountain is being patronized by the rich and the poor and there is no discrimination of any form whatsoever once people arrive or the mountain for prayers, and this shows the high reverence and high esteem with what the mountain is held.

To go for prayers in *Ori-Oke* Basin as an individual, or group does not require any permission or prior notification. In Psalm 24v3-4 the Holy Bible says, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place, He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up His soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully". During the time of Abraham, God instructed him, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of

Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you" Gen 22v2. This goes to show that God has always associated Himself with mountains, even from early biblical history. This is one of the important reasons Christians have attached a lot of importance to mountains. Christians believe that mountains and hills are endowed with divine presence culminating in their ascribing unlimited powers and spiritual significance to them.

Mountains Prayers are not out of place, there are many instances in the scripture where Jesus Christ went to the mountain for prayers (Matt 4v23). Mountain prayers provide a vital tool for effective Christian life, and a time of uninterrupted communion with God answers from the book.net. The Prayer Mountain is a facility built on a mountain of elevation owned by a specific church but used by all denominations and individuals for the Purpose of praying, fasting, meditating and studying the word of God. In Lk 9v28, the Bible says, "And it came to pass about eight days after, He took Peter, John and James and went up into the mountain to pray", that is to say that, right from inception, prayers have being offered on the mountains. Jesus Christ took his three disciples to the mountain for prayers. He thought them the importance of praying on the mountain and in solitude. However, it should be noted that prayers of Christian believers could be answered anywhere the name of Jesus Christ is mentioned with absolute faith in God.

Economic Potentials of Prayer Mountains

In recent years, Prayer Mountains have turned into business centres where shops are erected and items like water, anointing oil, among other items, are sold. Economic activities have become so prominent on the contemporary Prayer Mountains that the selling of these items has become a common phenomenon at *Ori-Oke* Basin. Transformations have occurred over the years because of the high demand for water, anointing oil, cooked food, bread, biscuits and candles among other items. These are the fundamental items associated with the regular prayers and visits to Prayer Mountains.

Shops and business centres have been established around the mountain. Another common item sold at the Prayer Mountain is cell phone recharge cards because of the importance of communication by the attendees. Recharge cards of all networks are being sold on the mountain, as users of Prayer Mountains, most times, take breaks to make calls to enable them communicate with their families or friends.

Shop 1, Showing Items Sold at *Ori-Oke* Basin, Ilorin.

Sachet and bottle water are commonly patronized items on the Prayer Mountain. Most users of the Prayer Mountain will always patronize these shops, because water is also seen as one of the key ingredients of healing, and it physically proffers solutions to some human problems. Individuals purchase water in pieces of sachets while some do it in bags to meet their spiritual and physical needs (Onundi, 2017). Obviously, the presence of *Ori-Oke* Basin has become a source of financial and economic benefits to some worshippers and some traders. In the course of my research, my resource informant told me of testimonies of some regular worshippers on the mountain, who came to the mountain to consult some prophets, who prayed for them using water for financial breakthrough. After some time, they returned to show appreciation to the prophet who prayed for them, the appreciation could be in kind or in cash. Some of the prophets or pastors praying for people

on the mountain earned additional income through this means. Most of these transactions are usually not known to the Chairman, Maintenance and Development Committee of the mountain. Most of these pastors also patronize these shops for the purchase of anointing oil, water and other items sold at the *Ori-Oke* shops (Owolabi, 2016).

Shop 2 Showing Items Sold at *Ori-Oke* Basin, Ilorin.

Anointing oil is one of the commonest items being brought to the mountain for prayers. The functions and spiritual significance of anointing oil cannot be overemphasized. The use of anointing oil is an integral part of the ordination process for priests, but it has also gained popularity over the years, and it is being used in different perspectives. Anointing oil has a lot of functions. In Mark 6v13, anointing oil was used with the laying of hands on the sick. It is

believed that anointing oil is very useful in healing; it is used in anointing people in which instance, it is applied directly on the head. Anointing oil is also used to make charms and fetish objects ineffective (Onundi, 2017). It is used to anoint objects, houses, shops, various items and business centres, among others. It is used to dispel evil spirits and nullify their actions on the victims. Anointing oil is also used on those who were into idol worship, witchcraft, rituals and various evils acts, especially when such people come to the Prayer Mountain for repentance and cleansing. Anointing oil is then applied on them as a form of cleansing and purification. It is also used to open the womb of those women who are barren (Adeola, 2016). It is believed that when prayed on, especially at the mountain prayers, the anointing oil brings instant healing when rubbed on the body, it remove spiritual curses and bad dreams. During the inception of Prayer Mountains, recharge cards were not sold on the mountains, but because of globalization, the use of the Global System of Mobile Communications (GSM) has become popular among the regular users of the Prayer Mountains creating business for traders.

The candle is an ignitable wick embedded in wax or an inflammable solid substance such as to allow that provides light. A candle is a lamp stick and is seen as a worthy offering to God to forgive and cleanse the sins of sinners. It is also used as an agent of sending away demons and evil spirits from the environment. Today at the Prayer Mountains, and because of the spiritual significance of the candle, shops around Prayer Mountains sell a lot of candles to those who have come to pray. Most denominations that hold night vigil prayers do use candles as a source of illumination during the prayers, and they are not allowed to come into the mountain with black, green or any other colours of candles; only the white candles are allowed on the mountain.

The users of *Ori-Oke* Basin also pay some money for some other services like the Maintenance of the toilets, while they are at the mountain. There is a box kept at the centre of the mountain, and this box is used as offering box. Those who worship are expected to drop offering in the box, but it is not mandatory or compulsory. There are

rules guiding the activities taking place on the Mountain because it is multi-denominational and open to everybody. Those in charge of the up keep and cleanliness of the Basin Prayer Mountain charge some fees to other prayer groups for using musical instruments, for example, during their prayer sessions. It is pertinent to note that some of the commercial activities are, most times, restricted to the gate, and outside the main premises of the Prayer Mountain (Segun, 2017). Some church leaders and administrators have however over the years changed the original spiritual focus of the church on mountain prayers because some of them have commercialized mountain top prayers. However, despite this short coming, mountain top prayers still remain efficacious, notwithstanding the modern realities of commercialization of the mountain top prayers (Ogunlade, 2017).

The Rules Guiding the *Ori-Oke* Basin

In spite of the fact that *Ori-Oke* is visited by all denominations, there are rules and regulations guiding the Basin Prayer Mountain.

1. Footwear are prohibited on the mountain
2. No lady menstruating is allowed to worship on the mountain
3. Rituals are not allowed on the mountain
4. There should be no fighting or physical scuffle that will disturb worship
5. Any group coming to the mountain for vigil must see the security men guiding the mountain
6. All groups must also consult the committee in charge of the mountain
7. Any person worshiping on the mountain must not litter the environment
8. No bicycle, motor cycle or car is allowed on the mountain
9. The mountain is not used as worship centre on Sundays
10. The women must cover their hair before prayers
11. An individual coming to the mountain must not use any other candle unless it is white in colour.
12. No pastor is allowed to collect money from the users of *Ori-*

Oke Basin. These are some of the rules guiding the *Ori-Oke* Basin prayers. 1st peter 1v15-16

The Significance of Ori-Oke Basin

One of the significant attributes of *Ori-Oke* is that the Prayer Mountain is seen as a holy ground, and people are not allowed to put on their footwear within the mountain premises no matter the status of the visitor to the mountain.

1. It is seen as a solution ground for overwhelming problems and a place where God's mercy flows freely.
2. Prayer Mountain is a place of deliverance.
3. Cherubim and Seraphim Movement usually holds yearly retreats for three days for all its members and other interested *Ori-Oke* users
4. Prayer Mountain attendance helps an individual to be more focused
5. It is a place of great solitude and reflection.
6. The Prayer Mountain is not only a good environment for spiritual communion, or spiritual sanctuary, it has also brought about unity among the Christian fold and Nigerians in general, truly making it ecumenical.

In spite of the spiritual and economic benefits of *Ori-Oke* Basin, there are also serious challenges in the environment like insecurity, dumping of nylons and other refuse and passing of excreta by those using the mountain (Salako, 2017). The rate at which the worshippers patronize the *Ori-Oke* Basin has also attracted criminals and encouraged criminality. Most criminals come in as worshippers to commit havoc, and as a result of this, the security men employed to guide the mountain have a herculean task of trying to identify criminals. Because of the indiscriminate dumping of refuse, cleaners were also employed to work and keep the place clean to avoid epidemics of various infectious diseases, breaking out on the mountain (Adeoti, 2017).

Conclusion

The Ori-Oke Basin has a lot of regular users and visitors who over the years have found a lot of spiritual blessings, solutions to intractable life's problems and fulfilment in praying on the mountain. It has attracted people of diverse backgrounds denominations and religions. It is truly ecumenical in every sense by unifying Nigerians. There is no doubt that it is of historic, spiritual and economic significance, and remains a great religious legacy. To some people, it is a solution centre and a place of solitude where God's mercy flows freely. To some other people it has provided a lucrative business and a major source of livelihood for them and their families, especially at a time of economic recession in Nigeria. Mountain top prayers still remain efficacious despite the modern realities of commercialization

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Chapter 18

Socio-Spiritual Dynamics of *Ori-Oke* among Indigenous Churches: An Empirical Analysis

Olatunji, A.G. & Ogunbiyi, O.O

Abstract

Spiritual objects are items that the people of a society attached sacred value to, and as a result, are given special and sacred attentions. More so, the items to be revered are always the consequences of socio-cultural practices and beliefs of the people. This study is an attempt to examine the socio-spiritual dynamics of ***Ori-Oke*** *as conceived by indigenous church members specific set of Christian Visitors to* ***Ori-Oke*** *as the object of empirical analysis. To achieve this objective, the study adopted survey method. Data for the study were generated through the use of questionnaire and Key in-depth Interview to collect quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. A total of 76 respondents were selected as samples for the study. The sample was chosen through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The social action and diffusionism theories were used as explanatory models for the study. Frequency distribution and percentage were used to analyse the quantitative data, while content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data generated for the study. Findings from the study revealed that members of indigenous African churches conceived of* ***Ori-Oke*** *as a sacred entity, and as such should be understood as such by all and sundry, in order to avoid conflicts among people of different faiths, who did not see the mountain top in the same light. This is necessary in order to improve on the spiritual functions performed by the entity to this set of people, and to avoid inter and intra religious conflicts that occur as a result of the differences in people's conception of the entity.*

Introduction

Man by nature is a spiritual being (Shankar, 2006), the spiritual nature of human being is bore out of his curiosity to provide answers to

certain metaphysical questions of life. The fact that spirituality is fundamental to human social existence, could be reflected from the fact that religion, which is external manifestation of spirituality, is described as one of the basic institutions in the society (Olatunji, 2010). Religion is conceived as a basic social institution because it performs a very important socio-psychological functions of providing answers to many meta-physical questions of living. Essentially, what makes religion unique from other social institutions is its ability to differentiate between the sacred and profane (Durkheim, 1968). In other words, while the profane are regarded as the worldly things, the sacred represents the spiritual realm. These elements represent the foundation of every belief system.

Thus, in every religious practice, certain physical and social elements are regarded as sacred, while some others are seen as profane. Many at times, the items usually referred to as sacred are those elements that human intellect cannot provide a formidable explanation for the secret behind its existence **(**Schneider, Francis & Smith, (2013). Specifically, one physical element that has been given sacred attention almost since the beginning of religious practices is the mountain hill. This assertion could be buttressed from the point that in many world known belief systems, mountain hill have been conceived as a special realm, a sacred entity that has enormous spiritual values. For an example, *Ori-Oke* (mountain or hill) is conceived as a deity among the Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria. This position is corroborated by the Internet Sacred Text Archive in African Religion. Similarly, some of the most-respected Hindu and Buddhists' temples were built on top of hills (Vardia, 2008). The Biblical/Quranic Stories of Moses and some other notable religious figures show some connection between their religious message and a hilly place (Exodus 3: 20).

Furthermore, one of the cardinal worship points of Muslim pilgrims is to visit the mountain *Arafat*. With special reference to Nigeria, it is common among some Christian denominations, to locate their place of worship on, or, around a hill top. Specifically, some sets of African Indigenous Churches always attach the word 'Oke' (Mountain) to give a special identification tag for their

churches. In other words, what could be deduced from the foregoing is that the reality of *Ori-Oke* has a significant spiritual value in many religious beliefs. However, despite the essential value and the significant effects given to the phenomenon of the mountain hills in many of the known religions of the world, many known researchers have not examine the dynamics of this physical entity among many religious adherents. Specifically, going by the value given to this entity by African indigenous Churches, there is the need to beam academic searchlight on the phenomenon. It is in line with this background that this study empirically examined the socio-spiritual dynamics of *Ori-Oke* among Christians of African Indigenous Churches.

An exercise such as this is necessary from the point of the fact that religion and religious objects serve important functions in human life generally, and more so, because any academic exercise relating to religion is an exercise targeted at improving the quality of human life generally. It is important to consider the socio- spiritual dynamics of *Ori-Oke* in this manner in order to improve on the academic attention given to the reality of spiritual objects. All of these efforts would contribute to knowledge in religious studies generally, and Sociology of religion specifically. Finally, an exercise such as this would serve as the bedrock on which further related studies could be laid upon.

Review of Relevant Literature

In order to achieve a better understanding of the topic, relevant literatures relating to the topic of discussion re essential for a review.

What is Spirituality?

The term spirituality is conceived differently by different people according to the context in which it is being used. However, despite the diverse conception, one key element of spirituality is its connection with meta-physical reality; it is often related with beliefs and religiosity and because of its relationship with religiosity, what constitutes spirituality is generally subjective (Diener et al., 2011; Bond, Lun, & Li, 2012). As such, what connote spirituality to

someone is not spiritual to another (Diener et al., 2011). In essence, the elements that constitute spirituality vary across religious belief systems (Eichhorn, 2012). According to Krentzman (2016), spirituality includes a sense of connection to something larger than us, and it typically involves a search for larger meaning in life. It may be described as sacred or transcendent experience or simply a deep sense of aliveness and interconnectedness (Hill 2000). Due to the nature of human being, he could be described as spiritual being and as such spirituality is a universal phenomenon.

The idea of spirituality is not new to religious and theological studies, although some forms of vagueness has crept into the use of the word today. The term spirituality has, therefore, been used in a variety of ways, but in its simplicity, the term attaches itself to matters that are related to sacred; the sacred in this sense that most times, cannot be seen, but perceivable, and can be contrasted with the physical or the earthly. Okoli's (2008: 3) insight on the concept of the spirituality is very profound. According to him, spirituality assumes the following meaning and applications:

i It connotes a sense of connection to something 'greater' than oneself, which normally includes an emotional experience of religious awe;

ii Matters of sanity and of psychological health;

iii An aspect of religion, which focuses of personal experience and devotion;

iv Perceiving or wishing to perceive life as more important (higher) more complex or more integrated with one's world view, as contrasted with the merely sensual;

v Practice or tradition of perceiving and internalizing one's 'true' nature and relationship to the rest of existence (i.e. God, creation, the universe, or life), and becoming free of the lesser egoic self (or ego) in favour of being more fully one's 'true self'

From the foregoing, it is apparent that spirituality is essentially the improvement of the human mind and soul by improving ones will power, an intimate relationship with the Supreme Being and the

world at large. In the light of this spirituality will cover the meaning of life, better comprehension of situation and places which also influence purposes for existence. Spirituality assists awareness of a connection with God, gods, nature or any other forms of the spirit as the psyche might imagine it. In this sense, nature will include natural phenomena such as mountains, hills, lakes, rivers, wilderness, or anywhere the sacred is experienced (Eneji et al, 2010). According to Gumo, Gisege, Raballah & Ouma (2012), African spirituality is expressed using symbols derived from the immediate African environment. They appreciated the fact that due to the indices of secularization and modernization, African religion has continued to influence the lives of both Christians and Muslims. Thus, spirituality could be seen as any reality (real or fictitious) that an individual attached sacred or special attention to. This normally manifests itself in various means such as religious traditions and practices, ethics, perceptions and beliefs that are anchored on the worldviews of the believer (Mbiti, 1969).

The concept of *Ori-Oke* in Yoruba and Biblical Epistemology

Ori-Oke is the Yoruba name for mountains or hill tops. It is a compound word embracing two key words that are joined together. The first word which is *Ori* among the Yoruba comes with several connotative implications. In the first instance, the word speaks of the literal head of a person. Secondly, it connotes the idea of the inner man which is referred to as *Ori inu*. This is the personality head symbolized by the physical head. Ademuleya (2007) posits that *Ori* in Yoruba belief occupies the centre of sacredness; and how it is conceived is embedded in the Yoruba myth concerning the creation of man and the role played by his creator. This is connected to the Yoruba conception of the destiny, anchoring on the myth of a man choosing his destiny and his destiny being affixed to him (Awolalu & Dopamu, 1979). Closely to the two accounts given above is a third connotation of the word, meaning a deity. *Ori* refers to a divinity that inhabits high places; this is against the backdrop of deification of

natural phenomena. Several Yoruba songs are sang in veneration of this *Ori*. One of them is:

Ori lo da mi	The Deity is my Creator
Eniyan ko o	It is not man
Olorun ni	It is God
Ori lo da mi	The Deity is my Creator

A fourth perception of *Ori* is premised on the fact that it speaks of a top, an apex, a place higher than the ordinary space and above man himself. In this sense, *Ori* is seen as an adverb speaking of a spot on a place or the top of a particular thing. In the context of this paper *Ori* is an adverbial clause depicting a higher spot of a place. From the foregoing, Ori in the Yoruba cosmology symbolizes the personality soul of man; it speaks of a divinity, and it is also used to mean a place. The second word *Oke*, means a height, a hill or a mountain. The combination of the two words to describe mountain hill among the Yoruba connotes the level of spiritual value given to *Ori-Oke* among the Yoruba.

In Christianity, the word mountain hill is mentioned in various places in the Bible for various reasons, ranging from spiritual to social. For instance, Moses received the Decalogue on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20; Jesus taught his disciples on the mount. (Matthew 5-8); he also went to pray on the mountain before choosing the twelve apostles (Mark 6: 46). In addition to this, Jesus, towards the end of his earthly ministry, also went to the garden of Gethsemane to pray for strength to bear and be able to complete the assignment before him. A look at some of these verses would reveal that the mountain top is seen as sanctified entity, a place that is treated with awe and reverence, a place where several social socio-spiritual problems confronting human being could be solved etc. However, it is important to note that despite the understanding of the Bible, regarding the mountain hills, the orthodox churches rarely visit or use the mountain hill for such socio-spiritual purpose, Thus, the argument of these authors is that the use of the mountain hill for prayers and worship by indigenous Christians is not as result of

diffusing the practice of mountain use in indigenous religion with Christianity, but because several biblical sayings also support it.

Overview of African Indigenous Churches

African indigenous churches are the churches that were founded by Africans, for the Africans in Africa (Ayegboyin, 1997). These churches appeared in the second part of the Twentieth century, and the churches have over time expanded to various parts of the globe. They have been considered under various names such as Spiritual Churches, Charismatic Churches, *Aladura* Churches, African Independent Churches and African Indigenous Churches (Osun, 1999). According to Ray (2000), these indigenous churches have registered themselves in the religious map of Christianity in Africa. By 1930, they have become so popular that they have become objects of study either as a whole or individually as Churches that emerged out of Africa. Scholars like Peel (1968), Omoyajowo (1982), Ayegboyin (1997) and Gaiya (2002) have devoted time and space to study these churches. The foundations of many of these Churches were the efforts of Yoruba people of South-Western Nigeria. Some of the churches under this category are shown in table 1

Table 1: Names of some Indigenous Churches in Nigeria, Names of the Founder and the Year of foundations

S.No.	Name of Church	Name of the Founder	Year of Foundation
1	Cheribum and Seraphim	Moses Orimolade and Abiodun Emmanuel	1925
2	Christ Apostolic Church	Ayo Babalola	1930
3	Celestial Church of Christ	S.B.J. Oshoffa	1947
4	Church of the Lord *Aladura*	Ayo Oshitelu	1930

Source: Olatunji and Ogunbiyi (2016)

The Cherubim and Seraphim Church was founded by the duo of Moses Orimolade Tunolase, an indigene of Ikare and a young lady living in Lagos in 1925, and by 1930, the Church has spread to many Yoruba cities and today, it has spread throughout Nigeria and the diaspora. The establishment of the Christ Apostolic Church was a disagreement between the Apostolic Church of London and its affiliated body in Nigeria. The Apostolic Church has the same foundation with the Christ Apostolic Church. However, the major difference between the Orthodox Churches and apostolic churches stems from a couple of factors, predominant among which include Pentecostal emphasis and issues related to contextualization of Christianity in Africa. (Johnson, 2011). The origin of the Church can be traced to four personalities. They are Pastors J. B. Sadare, I. B. Akinyele, D. O. Odubanjo and Joseph Ayo Babalola.

Christ Apostolic Church was founded by Ayo Babalola, a person who received a divine instruction to leave his work to preach the gospel, with the message that "prayer and omi-iye (the water of life) will cure all sicknesses." The Church then expanded from Lagos to other places. The secession was led by Ayo Babalola, who ignited the revival of the 1920s as a result of the resuscitation of a dead person, and they became Christ Apostolic Church. Celestial Church of Christ was founded by Pa S. B. J. Oschoffa, a carpenter who was a Methodist by faith before receiving his revelation. He started the Church in Dahomey in 1947. By 1952, the Celestial Church of Christ had expanded into Nigeria with Lagos as its headquarters (Isichei, 1995).

From Lagos, it has expanded into almost every part of the country, and has spread beyond the shores of Nigeria. These African Independent Churches were expressions of attempts at contextualizing Christianity in Africa. The Christianity introduced by the Whites was embedded in heavy western culture such that it was alien to the Africans (Johnson, 2011). One of the salient characteristics of these Independent Churches was to interpret Christianity and make it understandable to the Africans. Falaye (2015) concurs with this opinion when he said that the African Independent Churches were, "Africans' way of domesticating the

Christian teachings." Commenting on the characteristics of African Independent Churches, Kalu (2007: 8) came up with six "advocacies". These include: shared pneumatic emphasis; new religiosity; linked roots in the historical discourse of origins, kindred atmosphere of worldview, shared racial ideology and the re-interactive response to social predicament

By and large, African indigenous churches were mainly established to block the loop holes of some traditional religious practices that are in the Bible, but not previously considered in orthodox churches. Essentially, these churches borrowed some practices from African traditional socio-cultural system in order to adapt them to Christian religious beliefs. In other words, the African indigenous churches were established with the effort of Africanizing Christianity (Johnson, 2011).

Theoretical Exploration

In a further attempt to explain the socio-spiritual conception of indigenous churches of the mountain top, the argument should be situated in a theoretical framework. This is done in order to further justify the fact that *Ori-Oke* has socio-spiritual connotations among the indigenous Churches and also to bring out the reason why *Ori-Oke* is so venerated among them. According to Haralambos & Holborn (2000), a theory is a set of assumption that offers explanations about the nature, the cause or the dynamics of a phenomenon. Essentially, one of the functions of a theory in academic research is to juxtapose the line of reasoning of the researcher and to situate the claim of the researcher in the context of assumptions that have been made by previous scholars (Bichi, 2004). In this study, the theoretical positions that would be used to explain the dynamics and the conceptions of Ori-Oke among African Indigenous Church members are Social Action theory and Diffusionism theories.

Social Action Theory

The concept of social action is fundamental to Weberian sociological school of thought (Cuff, et.al. 2006). Weber conceived of Sociology as a comprehensive science of social action (Shankar-Rao, 1998). The social action paradigm stands in a place of theoretical perspective, as well as grand method of conducting research in the social sciences as observed by this researcher in 2015. As a theoretical perspective, it tends to focus on the importance of microscopic elements of social behaviour. As a method of conducting research, social action theorists argued against the use of physical science *erklaren* methods in studying social phenomena, they rather advocated for the humanist *Verstehen* method. Their conception is that, the same method used in studying physical phenomena cannot be adequately used in studying social phenomena. They substantiate their argument on the fact that while physical phenomena are without social values, human beings which is the subject of study in the social sciences are filled with subjective orientations and full of social values, hence the same method cannot be used to study the physical and social (Olatunji, 2015).

In other words, if one wants to achieve a good understanding of the causes of human behaviour in a particular social setting, one must project into the actor's subjective situation. According to Weber (1949), one of the goals of sociological research should be the understanding of action in terms of its subjective values. Social action theory was developed from Weber's interpretive analysis, to explain how subjective orientations produced actions, and why actions in turn influenced meanings in the social realm (Labinjoh, 2002 cited in Olatunji, 2015). To Weber (1923), social action is an activity carried out by an individual in which an individual attached personal meaning to, and that meaning is usually the foundation of behaviour.

According to Labinjoh, (2002: 22) "the basis of Weber's Sociology is that the human subject is a free being who project meaning and seeks ends and such ends or goals of social actions are determined by the values of the society while the means to achieve them are prescribed by the norms". One of the conditions that make

social action possible according to this school of thought is the subjective meaning attached to it by the actor.

In relation to our present purpose, African Indigenous Church member's conception of the *Ori-Oke* could only be well understood in the context of the spiritual value given to it. For an example, the subjective meaning given to the mountain top by the Orthodox churches is different from that given by the indigenous churches hence the reason for the differences in their conceptions about the sacred nature of the hill as well as their dispositions towards the utilization of the place for spiritual activities. However, the theory of social action is useful in explaining the subjective factors that conditions the conception of the indigenous churches regarding *Ori-Oke* but this theory have not explain the reason why the Indigenous churches conceived of the *Ori-Oke* as such as sacred entity. In other to cover this shortcoming, an anthropological theory referred to as Diffusionism is examined.

The Theory of Diffusionism

Diffusionism is an anthropologically-oriented theory that is used to explain the reality of culture in human society. The concept is specifically used to explain how the cultural process through cultural beliefs and practices integrate into one another. Some of the proponents of this theory are British scholars such as G. Elliot Smith, William J Perry and W.H.R Rivers. These scholars held the view that cultural elements, (tangible or intangible) beliefs and cultural practices originated only in one part of the world from which such an element is transported into other societies of the world. For instance, they held that Egypt was the culture centre of the world and the cradle of civilization, and it is from this point that civilization spreads to other parts of the globe.

In other words, diffusionism refers to the process of transmission of cultural characteristics or traits from a specific point to all other societies (Harris, 1995). They believed that most inventions happened just once, and because human being is capable of imitation, such inventions were then integrated or inculcated by people in other societies (Cuff, et al, 2005). Thus, they specifically look for diffusion

and variations that gradually occurred, as people of different cultural backgrounds interact with one another. In relations to our present purpose, diffusionism could be used to explain the genesis, or one of the fundamental reasons why African indigenous churches make use of the *Ori-Oke* as a spiritual haven. A causal connection that could be made in this regard, is the fact that because the indigenous churches were established by Africans in a bid to draw more Africans into the fold of Christianity, some of the earlier Africa conceptions of spirituality diffused into Christian religious practices. As revealed earlier in this study, African's conception of *Ori-Oke* before the coming of Christianity is a major factor that made founders of the indigenous churches to cultivate the habit of using the mountain top as a special sacred realm that could be used for spiritual purpose.

According to Ojo (1993), the spirituality attached to the mountain is as the result of the perception of natural phenomena in African cosmology. Mbiti (1981) observed that, though foreign religions have influenced African religiosity, each of these religions has equally adapted, and is shaped by the religious heritage of the Africans. Since African spirituality is intricately connected with African worldview, values, practices and belief systems that are connected to natural resources, places or habitat, such a world-view have found its way into imported religious beliefs in Africa. Visiting the *Ori-Oke* for prayer worship could be cited as a good example in this regard.

Methodology

The core objective of this research is to examine the socio-spiritual conception of *Ori-Oke* among Christians, attending Africa Indigenous Churches. To achieve this objective, survey method is adopted to carry out the research because this method has been found useful in conducting a research of this nature. The choice of indigenous Christian churches as the research respondents is as a result of the fact that this set of Christians utilized the mountain top more than their counterparts in orthodox churches. More so, I is obvious that indigenous churches use the mountain top with some

sociological undertones, that is, this is precipitated by some socio-cultural factors. Primary data used for the study were obtained through self-administered questionnaire, and Key In-depth Interview (KII). The Questionnaire was used to obtain certain socio-demographic data, as well as and certain socio-spiritual dynamics inherent in the respondents. KII was used to retrieve qualitative data, relating to the respondents' socio-spiritual conception of *Ori-Oke*.

The population of the study consists of 76 persons who the researchers meet on a popular *Ori-Oke* often visited by Christians for spiritual purpose in Ilorin. This mountain top is chosen because several members of the indigenous churches around the area claimed to have visited the mountain at one point or the other. It is also clear that the *Ori-Oke* is not owned by a specific church. The researchers realized that this mountain is not controlled by any specific church. It is a free space where Christians come from far and near to perform different spiritual activities, especially praying and worshipping. The sampling technique was purposive and snowball. Purposive sampling was used to specifically select only those that are seen as Christians and those who have visited the mountain for spiritual purpose. Snowball was used to get different groups of worshippers who visit the mountain top, at every point in time, including overnight periods. All the 76 questionnaire distributed were retrieved because it is self-administered. Descriptive statistics was employed for analysis of the data collected for the study. Frequency distribution and percentage table were used for descriptive analysis of data collected while the qualitative data were analysed by describing the contents of the data.

Data Presentation and analysis of Findings

This section of the research is used to present and quantitatively analyse the socio-demographic features of the study respondents

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of the Respondents

1	**Gender**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Male	21	27.6
	Female	55	72.4
	Total	**76**	**100**
2	**Age**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	below 20	13	17.1
	21-40	25	32.9
	40 years and above	38	50
	Total	**76**	**100**
3	**Marital Status**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Single	29	38.2
	Married	17	22.4
	Others	30	39.5
	Total	**76**	**100**
4	**Ethnic affiliation**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Yoruba	66	86.8
	Igbo	5	6.6
	Hausa	1	1.3
	Others	4	5.3
	Total	**76**	**100**
5	**Occupation**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Unemployed	27	35.5
	Self employed	29	38.2
	Paid work	20	26.3
	Total	**76**	**100**

6	**Denomination**	**Frequency**	**Total**
	Orthodox churches	11	14.5
	Indigenous churches	66	86.8
	Total	**76**	**100**
7	**How often is the visit?**	**Frequency**	**Total**
	Daily	18	23.7
	Weekly	33	43.4

	Monthly	21	27.6
	Total	**76**	**100**
8	**Purpose of Visitation**	**Frequency**	**Total**
	Pure worship	44	57.9
	solve a problem *(healing and deliverance)*	32	42.1
	Total	**76**	**100**
9	**time of visit**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Early in the day	56	73.7
	Late in the day (Overnight)	11	14.5
	Anytime of the day	9	11.8
	Total	**76**	**100**
10	**mode of worship**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Individual capacity	17	22.4
	in group	59	77.6
	Total	**76**	**100**

Source: Olatunji and Ogunbiyi (2016)

Item 1 of the Table shows that the numbers of male who visit the Ori-Oke is 21 (27.6%), while that of the female is 55 (72.4%),this shows that the numbers of female who visit the *Ori-Oke* are more than the male counterparts. This could be as a result of the fact that women are more flexible than men regarding their ability to cope with unwanted situation and conditions. Item 2 of the Table shows that the number of people below the age of 20 who visit *Ori-Oke* is 13 (17.1%), the number of people between the age of 21 and 40 who visit *Ori-Oke* is 25 (32.9%), while the number of people who are 40 years and above who visit *Ori-Oke* is 38 (50%). This shows that the numbers of people who are 40 years and above who visit *Ori-Oke* are more than other people in the lower age grade. This also shows that people tend to put more interest in religious issues as they grow older. Item 3 of the Table revealed that the number of single people who visit ori-oke is 29 (38.2%), the number of married people is 17 (22.4%), while the number of 'others' who visit *Ori-Oke* is 30 (39.5%).

This shows that the numbers of people with other marital statuses apart from married and single who visit *Ori-Oke* are more than single and married people.

It could be seen from the Item 4 of the Table that the number of Yoruba people who visit *Ori-Oke* is 66 (86.8%), the number of Igbo people is 5 (6.6%), the number of Hausa people is 1 (1.3%) and number of other ethnic groups who visit *Ori-Oke* is 4 (5.3%). This shows that the numbers of Yoruba people who visit are more than the numbers of other ethnic groups. This might be as a result of the fact that Ilorin – the city in which the mountain was located is largely dominated by the Yorubas. It could be conceived from Item 5 of the Table that the number of unemployed people who visit *Ori-Oke* is 27 (35.5%), number of self-employed people is 29 (38.2%), while number of people working paid jobs is 20 (26.3%). This shows that the numbers of self-employed people who visit ori-oke are more than the numbers of unemployed and paid workers.

Item 6 of the Table revealed that the number of Orthodox Church members who visit the *Ori-Oke* is 11 (14.5%), while the number of indigenous church members is 66 (86.8%). Thus, members of indigenous churches visit *Ori-Oke* more than the orthodox churches. This implies that the religious doctrine of the African Indigenous churches favours visiting the Ori-Oke. Item 7 of the table shows that the number of people who visit the Ori-Oke on a daily basis is 18 (23.7%), those who visit the place weekly is 33 (43.4%) while those who visit monthly are 21 (27.6%). This implies that people go to *Ori-Oke* more on a weekly basis. Item 8 of the table revealed that people who go to *Ori-Oke* for pure worship are 44 (57.9%), while the number of people who go to *Ori-Oke* to have their problem solved is 32 (42.1%). This shows that people who go to *Ori-Oke* for pure worship are more than those who go to there to find solutions to their problems. Item 9 shows that the number of people who go *Ori-Oke* early in the day is 56 (73.7%), number of people who go late in the day is 11 (14.5%), while the number of people who go there at any time of the day is 9 (11.8%). This shows that many of the *Ori-Oke* goers do visit the place early in the day. Item 10 of the table shows that the number of people who visit ori-oke individually

is 17 (22.4%), while the number of people who go in groups is 59 (77.6%). This implies that a large number of people visit the *Ori-Oke* engage in spiritual activities in group. This could be used to juxtapose the fact that human being like performing many social activities in group.

Spiritual Connotations of *Ori-Oke* among African Indigenous Churches: The Empirical Overview

African Indigenous churches were technically separated from the Orthodox churches, because the indigenous churches were established by Africans, while the orthodox churches were established by the Europeans (Johnson, 2011). As a result of the background of the founders of these churches, the churches are characterised by some practices which are not commonly found among the Christians in orthodox churches. The conception of the founders is that incorporating such practices into Christianity would make the Christian belief close to the understanding of Africans (Ogunbiyi, 1985). One of such beliefs and practices is giving some reverence and awe for the *Ori-Oke* (the mountain top). The African Indigenous Churches have been known to have a great respect for *Ori-Oke* as a worship and prayer centre. As African-oriented Churches, these Churches have discovered the joy in meeting God at *Ori-Oke* early at the inception of these Churches (Olayiwola, 1987: 44).

These Christians have been known to be very active in prayer and spiritual lives generally to the extent that some of them are being referred to as *Aladura* (Prayer warriors). Although this set of Christians believed that prayers could be held anywhere, some sites or scenes are more appropriate for making prayers than others (Jegede, 2010: 46-49). This is the reason for their going to pray in places where they feel the presence of the Almighty God. Some of the responses made by the KII participants corroborate this assertion. A 55-year old woman, a member of Christ Apostolic Church states thus:

> The mountain is a sacred place and a spiritual entity where one could meet with the Lord. I preferred coming here for prayer because of its unique nature and because of calmness and serenity and I have been going to the mountain for worship since my early age in the Church.

Another participant, Pastor Shodayo, a 37-year old woman, responded thus:

> By mere looking at this environment, one would observe several wonders of the Lord. This is a reflection that this place is a unique, sacred and spiritual enclave, where one could meet with the Lord …

Below is yet the opinion of another respondent, Mrs Aladeniyi, 42-year old, a member of an apostolic church.

What could be deduced from the foregoing responses is that this set of Christians conceived the hilltop as a unique entity with several natural signs; and as a place with high and enormous spiritual value and it is in the light of this that they visit there to fulfil certain religious obligations. Essentially, these places are often regarded to as sacred places where people often believe that prayers are answered automatically. Aysegboyin (2010: 89), in his assessment of the Aladura Churches, has these to say:

> *Yes Ori-Oke is sacred, a place filled with spiritual value. This is the reason why I have loved to go to the hill top to conduct my prayers. Although My God is not limited to a particular geographical place.*

In order to aid spiritual exercises, the *Aladura* developed preference for the use of what they have termed as *ile mimo* or *Ori-Oke* (sacred places) which they use for the purposes of prayer or as a sort of spiritual retreat. It is believed that prayers when offered in these sacred places are always very efficacious.

The responses made by some of the respondents of the Key in-depth interview revealed this further. Mrs Ayorinde, a member of the cherubim and seraphim church has this to say:

> Personally, I believed that the Ori-Oke is a sacred entity and I have developed the attitude of visiting Ori-Oke for prayer sessions because I observed that prayers made on this platform is often answered..

Mrs Ileladewa, a member of the Celetial Church of Christ, also expressed her opinion:

> To the best of my own understanding, this place (Ori-Oke) is not just a place but it is a sacred place, a place that is specially designed by the Almighty for people to seek his Face. It is a sanctified place.

The above responses show that ori-oke is not only conceived as sacred by this set of Christians but it also seen as a sort of prayer closet. Some of these indigenous African churches have made themselves so familiar with the mountains to the extent that they occasionally make the place a meeting point to perform other socio-spiritual activities such as religious carnivals, festivals and ceremonies of the churches. During such occasions, these churches perform ceremonious activities such as *Gigun Ori Oke* (ascending of sacred hills and mountains) where they spend days ranging from three, seven, twenty one to forty days alone in spiritual exercises. Responses given by some of the interviewee corroborate this further:

> Actually, I have come here today at my individual capacity but I must tell you that there are times when we come here in group, there are some situations whereby we (church congregation) go to the Ori-oke to perform group prayers of celebrate out church anniversary on this ori-oke. **A mechanic and member of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church who came to pray for breakthrough.**

In addition to the foregoing, Ori-Oke is conceived by the indigenous churches as an important spiritual place where divine healing could be received.

You see ni Ori-Oke yi (On this mountain hill), it is a place of deliverance, it is a place where the spiritual problems of many have been solved. On this mountain, God is doing wonder and people are receiving blessings every now and then. To God be the Glory.

A respondent gave similar response thus:

> Actually, a friend brought me to this mountain when I disclosed some of my problems for her. Although I reluctantly followed her here but since I have been coming here to pray, God has been faithful to me, I have received enormous blessing and Miracles have been happening in my life and that of my family since my coming to this mountain top. **A 38 years Woman who trades in House hold items in Garage Offa area of Ilorin**

This conception could be further understood by the acronym given to different hilly and mountain sites used for this purpose. Such names include: *Agbala Itura* (vine yard or sacred place of mercy); *Agbala Iwosan* (vine yard of healing); *Agbala Iyanu* (vineyard of miracles); *Agbala Idande* (vineyard of deliverance) and so on. Responses given by the study respondents further justified this assertion. A pastor responded thus:

> People come to this Ori Oke Agbara for answers to different challenges of life. Some come for the fruit of the womb, others are seeking for forgiveness, while yet a few are seeking protection from curses and generational enemies. The Bible says that God can give solutions to people in problems (Mathew 11: 28). **A 35 years old Christ Apostolic Church Pastor who led congregation to pray on the mountain hill**

Another respondent said:

> Ori-oke is divine place, it is a place where problems of people of old time solve several spiritual problems. There exist several portions of the Bible that give evidence of deliverance and solution to the challenges of those who come to God. For instance, the blind see (Matthew 11: 4-5).

In addition to the above, members of these Churches often visit the Ori-Oke for a couple of reasons. These include the fact that they are directed through the Spirit to go and offer prayers on Ori Oke. Usually, these directives may come from Holy Spirit directives that may come through dreams, visions, and trances or tongues interpretations. The instructions given via these media may be collectives involving every member of a Church, family or a particular group in the Church. On the other hand, the instructions may be individualistic touching on the need for the individual to go to the hill top to pray. This is further shown in the responses of the study respondents:

> I have received Miracles on this mountain. For instance, let me tell you that I have been barren (Sic) for eighteen years but when I started attending services on this hill top I am now blessed with the fruit of the Womb, am now nursing my second son, in fact, I come to this mountain hill from Abuja on a monthly basis **A 43 year Old civil servant who come to the mountain at least once in a month**

Another respondent responded that God provided job for him after he started visiting the Ori-Oke for prayer and worship

> Initially, I do not really believed in the miracle of the Ori-Oke until this my pastor encourage me to come, Although I was reluctant at first but when I start receiving God's blessings through prayers and fasting, I developed the habit of coming down here at least once in a week **A 36 year Old man working with an Accounting firm in Ilorin metropolis**

In addition, members of indigenous churches conceived of Ori-Oke as places used for spiritual retreats with the main intention of developing their spiritual lives. Others mount the Ori-Oke during festival periods of a particular Churches or the annual date of the establishment of the Ori-Oke. Responses made by some of the interviewed respondents corroborate this further:

> I came here today at my individual capacity but sometimes I come in the company of other church members especially at the periods when we use to have special Ori-Oke service or some other times when we come for marathon prayer and fasting for a specific period of time. **A choir member of one of the Apostolic Churches around the mountain site.**

At other times, individual members of the indigenous Churches often relate to the Ori- Oke due to divine callings. Those who are called like this, usually live on the Ori-Oke or frequent the place to offer prayers for themselves and those who believe in their ministries. One of the respondents said:

> If you observe rightly, you would see that many times you come here, you always meet me, this is because my coming is not my own volition, rather it is a divine command, I was actually called by God to come and domicile myself here to pray, fast and engage in worship and to render divine assistance to those who are in need of deliverance from all sorts of bondages. **AA 41 year Old man by name Pastor Eri who is always available at the ori-oke**

Another interviewee responded with a similar account:

> It is unfortunate that lately many people come here to pray for people without divine clearance, as for me, my action of praying for people on this mountain is not by my choice, but rather by the direction of the Holy spirit, if you are not called or chosen to do it and you claimed it, you might end up regretting your action **A 51 year old woman who pray for people on the mountain.**

Bye and large, what could be deduced from the foregoing is that the mountain top *Ori-Oke* is generally venerated by the indigenous Churches as a place with enormous spiritual value, a place where one could attain spiritual connection with the most high, a place where one could develop his/her spiritual level, a place of healing and deliverance from different shackles of life, a place of redemption and an entity where certain socio-spiritual functions could be performed. More so, it is a place managed by people who have received a divine command to do so. Generally, these African Indigenous church members gave high reverence to the mountain hill, and as such have been one of their cardinal places of prayer and worship. In fact, some of these churches like the Apostolic Faith usually attach the tag *Oke* to their other names as a church.

Conclusion

The foregoing has been used to examine the spiritual denotations and connotations of *Ori-Oke* among indigenous Christian Church attendants. It could be deduced therein that the *Ori-Oke* is a highly revered space among the indigenous Christians; it is a place that is reserved for spiritual transcendence and divine connection. The foregoing also show that the conception of the indigenous Christians about the mountain hill could have some scriptural backings, but it is largely as a consequence of some sort of cultural diffusion from the indigenous African belief system. The two theories used in the study have been used to juxtapose these argument. It could thus be deduced from the analysis in this paper, thus far, that *Ori-Oke* is conceived as a sacred entity among the indigenous Christian faithful and, as such, should be understood by all and sundry in order to avoid conflicts among people of different faiths in the country.

Specifically, this paper is of the view that, based on the spiritual value given to the mountain top by the African indigenous churches, there is the need for robust attempt to target the public for awareness of this fact, especially among non-Christian faithful, especially people of other faiths that should be made to see the need for inter-religious tolerance, such that the religious activities of these indigenous

churches on the mountain hill would not be halted or disturbed. This is necessary because the *Ori-Oke* which used to be a secluded place before, are now becoming fast surrounded by residential houses and or a market place, thus there is the need for public awareness of the importance of this entity to all and sundry in order to avert crises that usually erupt between the *Ori-Oke* visitors and the residents surrounding it.

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Chapter 19

Socio-Psychological Discourse of Mountain Prayer *Ori-Oke* and Healing-Seeking Process in Nigeria

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Abstract

It can be theologically observed that Prayer Mountain in recent times has taken into consideration the people's health-seeking behaviour. Thus, health-seeking behaviour may invariably be seen as a social, as well as psychological action undertaken by individuals who perceive themselves as having a health challenge or to be ill for the purpose of finding an appropriate remedy. In fact, different dimensions have been associated with improved health. As such, religious practices have been associated with healing in a way that people obviously visit Prayer Mountain for good health and for cure from illness. This is among the reasons why it cannot be denied that people pray for health, and for cure from sickness, especially the healing at places of pilgrimage and healing through related forms of intervention. Therefore, the research methodology adopted in this work is empirical and phenomenological approach. The paper postulates that a divine entity or force in the people's health-related issues is embedded or enhanced in socio-psychological reality of humans.

Introduction

In some human societies, mountain prayer *Ori-Oke* has beautifully influenced, the people's health-seeking behaviour socially and psychologically. Health seeking behaviour may invariably be seen as a social, as well as psychological action undertaken by individuals who perceive themselves as having a health problem, or as being ill for the purpose of finding an appropriate remedy. In fact, health is a very important need necessary for social, psychological, as well as economic development; it is an essential ingredient of life desired by

everybody, irrespective of age, race, ethnicity, status, profession, or background. As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2015), Health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Davies, 2005).

More so, good health-seeking behaviour is vital for the survival of mankind, and its importance cannot be overemphasized. This is as a result of arrays of ailments which parade themselves in our community of today. Health-seeking behaviour is ones' consciousness on how to remain healthy, and how to consult when the person perceives any threat to his/her health. Just as individual differences exist, so also are the strategies people adopt when their health is being threatened, or in their bid to remain healthy.

In view of the above, different dimensions of consideration have been shown to result in psychological, social and biological changes that are actually, or potentially associated with improved health. As such, Religious practices have been associated with healing for millennia in such a way that people obviously visit mountain prayer for good health and for relief from illness. Apart from the above, like in any developing country, several factors determine the health-seeking behaviour of Nigerian populace of which the cleaners belong. These factors include the severity of the symptoms of illness, socio-cultural influences, distance, place cost of treatment, Income, level of education and quality of healthcare facilities (Tanimola and Julius, 2009).

Moreover, long before the advent of orthodox and the knowledge of the aetiology of ill health, man attributed ill health to all sorts of things, among which are the anger of the gods and goddesses or deity, recognized by that community, sacrileges committed or the adversary of their enemies. All these greatly affect the health-seeking behaviour of people with such believe which in turn encourage them to patronize traditional healers, and adopt the use of charm for protection. The advent of modern medicine, and the knowledge of the causes of ill health have had great influence on health-seeking behaviour of the people (WHO, 2015).This is among the reason why it cannot be denied that, across the planet, people

pray for health and for relief of sickness, especially healing through mountaineering prayer, healing through religious rituals, healing at places of pilgrimage and healing through related forms of intervention.

Overview of Socio-psychological Discourse

The social psychology of discourse is a new field of study that partly overlaps with the social psychology of language In the 1970s, cognitive psychology and Artificial Intelligence joined the disciplines in which increasing interest in discourse constituted one of the major new developments of the last decade (Van Dijk, 1985b). The extension to the social psychology of discourse only took place in the 1980s (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Robinson, 1985). There are virtually no books in social psychology that feature concepts such as discourse or text in their subject index, and there are very few journal articles in the field that explicitly deal with discourse structures. This means that this chapter will not be able to review a large body of social psychological research that explicitly deals with discourse structures, although I take the liberty to reinterpret several studies in a discourse analytical framework.

To compensate for a solid research tradition, part of this chapter will therefore be theoretical and programmatic, in order to chart and stimulate future directions and work in this new field. Despite this lack of explicit interest in discourse, social psychology has many sub-domains that allow or require a discourse analytical approach. After all, there are few fundamental socio-psychological notions that do not have obvious links with language use in communicative contexts, that is, with different forms of text or talk. Social perception, impression management, attitude change and persuasion, attribution, categorization, intergroup relations, stereotypes, social representations (SRs) and interaction are only some of the labels for the major areas of current social psychology in which discourse plays an important, but as yet rather disguised, role.

True, language and especially communication have played a prominent part in the history of social psychology (Brown, 1965), as

is abundantly made clear in this paper but the essentially discursive nature of language use has been mostly reduced to a more or less intuitive study of messages, and at present, social psychology mainly focuses on properties of speech. In other words, after linguistics and its sister-disciplines of psycho- and sociolinguistics, discourse analysis has something to offer to most social psychologists. The reverse is equally true: social psychological insights are of primary importance for the development of discourse analysis. While a definition of the notion of discourse cannot, of course, be given (the whole discipline, or at least a whole theory, provides such a definition), I understand discourse in this chapter both as a specific form of language use, and as a specific form of social interaction, interpreted as a complete communicative event in a social situation.

However, what distinguishes discourse analysis from sentence grammars is that discourse analysis in practice focuses specifically on phenomena beyond the sentence. Obviously, uttered words or sentences are integral parts of discourse. Since, empirically speaking, the meaning of discourse is a cognitive structure, it makes sense to include in the concept of discourse not only observable verbal or non- verbal features, or social interaction and speech acts, but also the cognitive representations and strategies involved during the production or comprehension of discourse. The research would here ignore multiple problems related to the precise delimitation of discourse with respect to others (forms of) interaction, with respect to non-verbal communication, or with respect to other cognitive structures and strategies. The notion of text, sometimes used as the purely verbal aspect of discourse, sometimes as the abstract linguistic form underlying discourse as a form of language use, is here used mostly in its everyday sense of written discourse.

Meaning of Health-seeking Behaviour

Health-seeking behaviour has been defined as a "sequence of remedial actions that individuals undertake to rectify perceived ill-health." In particular, health-seeking behaviour can be described with data collected from information such as the time difference between

the onset of an illness and the time of getting in contact with a healthcare professional, and the type of healthcare provider patients sought help from. Health-seeking behaviour also includes how compliant patient is with the recommended treatment, reasons for choice of healthcare professional and reasons for not seeking help from healthcare professionals (WHO, 2015). In the broadest sense, health behaviour includes all behaviours associated with establishing and maintaining a healthy physical and mental state (Primary Prevention). Health-seeking behaviours also include behaviours that deals with any digression from the healthy state, such as controlling (Secondary Prevention) and reducing impact and progression of an illness (Tertiary prevention).

The concept of studying health seeking behaviours has evolved with time. Today, it has become a tool for understanding how people engage with the health care systems in their respective socio-cultural, economic and demographic circumstances. All these behaviours can be classified at various institutional levels: family, community, health care services and the state. In places where health care systems are considered expensive with a wide range of public and private health care services providers, understanding health seeking behaviours of different communities and population groups is important to combat unaffordable costs of health care.

The Models of Health-seeking Behaviour

In the literatures there are two models of health-seeking behaviour which revolved around the Health-seeking model pathway model and determinant models. In health seeking model; various studies demonstrated that one's decision to engage with a particular medical channel is influenced by a variety of socio-economic variables, sex, age, social status of women, type of illness, access to services and perceived quality of the service. On the one hand, such a man was the first to use the pathway model to describe the steps of the process from identification of symptoms to the use of particular health-care providing facilities. This model aims to identify a logical sequence of steps. It also analyses how social and cultural factors

affect this sequence. This has been primarily an anthropological approach, using qualitative methods of investigation.

Fabrega then developed a theoretical model of illness behaviour, which concentrates on the information that an individual might be expected to process during an illness episode. This approach is based on economics and elementary decision theory, and the principle of cost-benefit is used to evaluate the action. Since health-seeking behaviour is a social process that involves individual's interaction with the social network, it is crucial to look at the decision-making processes from this perspective.

This model is based on a more bio-medical and quantitative approach. Instead of focusing on the steps one would take to preserve or improve health, this model focuses on highlighting a set of determinants which are associated with the choice of different kinds of health service. There are various models to explain the different determinants of Health-seeking behaviours. Andersen's group factors influencing determinants into 3 main categories: population characteristics, health care systems and the external environment. Next, another researcher focused on the individual's health behaviour and adoption of the sick role. This model specifically focuses on one's health behaviour and it ignores the effect of social network on the decision-making process. All of these models of determinants and factors influencing health-seeking behaviours, are vital as they help us to understand how, and why one would seek care earlier than others. As for illnesses that require immediate care, such models are informative as they contribute to interventions for the reduction of transmission and complications arising from neglect.

The Health Belief Model

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is an intrapersonal (within the individual, knowledge and beliefs) theory used in health promotion to design intervention and prevention programs. It was designed in the 1950's and continues to be one of the most popular and widely used theories in intervention science. The model was created in

reaction to a failed, free tuberculosis screening program. The focus of the HBM is to assess health behaviour of individuals through examination of perceptions and attitudes someone may have towards disease and the negative outcomes of certain actions. The HBM assumes that behaviour change occurs with the existence of three ideas at the same time: *

- An individual recognizes that there is enough reason to make a health concern relevant (perceived susceptibility and severity).
- That person understands that he or she may be vulnerable to a disease or negative health outcome. (Perceived threat).
- The individual must realize that behaviour change can be beneficial, and that the benefits of that change will outweigh any costs of doing so. (perceived benefits and barriers)

Individual Perceptions

Individual perceptions speak directly to the knowledge and beliefs that a person has about his behaviours and the outcomes they could have. This section of the paper includes two main sections: perceived susceptibility and perceived severity.

Perceived Susceptibility: Within the health field, susceptibility refers to the risk a person has to a particular disease or health outcome. Within the context of the HBM, perceived susceptibility examines the individual's opinions about how likely the behaviours they partake in, are going to lead to a negative health outcome. For example, look at an individual who smokes. Smoking is known to have many complications such as lung cancer, bladder cancer, etc. If a smoker does not feel that he is at risk of developing any of these diseases, he has no reason in his mind to make a behaviour change. One of the goals of the HBM is to change perceptions of susceptibility in order to move towards behaviour change.

Perceived Severity: Most people are familiar with the word severity as how serious a situation or action can be. In the HBM perceived severity addresses how serious the diseases that a person is susceptible to can be. In the case of a smoker, lung cancer is one of the leading causes of death among the American population. A

smoker may not understand how difficult lung cancer can be, to detect, and how difficult it can be to treat. They also may not know how painful and long-lasting a disease can be later in life. The HBM seeks to increase awareness of how serious the outcomes of behaviours can be in order to increase the quality of one's life. Now that there is an understanding of Individual Perceptions it is important to understand how Modifying Factors can affect some ones decision to change.

Modifying Factors

While Individual Perceptions were internalized, in the Health Belief Model Modifying Factors step outside the body, to examine the use of outside influences to affect how threatened a person feels, by the outcomes of continuing the same behaviours that put him at risk.

Perceived Threat Susceptibility*:* As stated before, perceived threat susceptibility display how someone acknowledges that his/her behaviour could lead to a specific disease. Threat takes the idea one step further, by examining just how likely it is that the disease could be developed. To use lung cancer again, someone who has been smoking for a year may not feel threatened by potential disease, because he/she has not been smoking for a very long time, and if he/she quits, the body can recover.

On the other hand a smoker who has been smoking for 25 years may feel very threatened by lung cancer, if he has developed a strong cough. The cough could be a symptom that increases his level of threat and triggers his decision to quit.

Environmental Factors Environmental factors can add to the threat of disease. Demographic background can cause one to be more at risk such as race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Someone living in poverty would be more threatened by a disease if they could not afford health care. Also peers and other influential people can have an influence. If an entire group of friends smoke together, it is going to be more difficult for one person to quit. This is exemplified thus;

Cues to Action: Lastly, cues to action are reasons why an individual realizes he could be threatened by a serious disease. These could be media or concerned loved ones. Cues to action are anything that triggers a decision to change a behaviour. The previous two categories have built on each other and lead to likelihood of action.

Likelihood of Action: After becoming aware of the potential for developing a disease, if behaviour does not change, it is important to weigh out the benefits and the barriers to taking action and determine if it is worth it.

Perceived Benefits: What are the benefits to a change? In the HBM, the goal is a greater quality of life for an individual both mentally and physically. Clearly, a benefit to change would increase health, but there could be other factors that exist on an individual level.

Perceived Barriers: What are the reasons why I cannot change my behaviour? Barriers could be anything from losing friends, to not having enough money or even self-efficacy problems such as not believing in one's self. For change to take place, the benefits must be stronger than the barriers.

Factors Affecting Health-seeking Behaviours

The health-seeking behaviour of a community determines how health services are used, and in turn the health outcomes of populations. Factors that determine health behaviour may be physical, socio-economic, cultural or political. Indeed, the utilisation of a health care system may depend on educational levels, economic factors, cultural beliefs and practices. Other factors include environmental conditions, socio-demographic factors, and knowledge about the facilities, gender issues, political environment, and the health care system itself.

Illness types, severity

Depending on illness' type, people seek different forms of treatments specific to the disease they are diagnosed with. In addition, depending on the severity of the diagnosed disease, people

might select different forms of treatments and medication. It was found that individuals perceived their illness to be either mild, or not for medical treatment, which prevented them from seeking healthcare treatment. In addition, poverty emerged as a major determinant of health-seeking behaviour as treatments were often perceived as either a waste of money, lack of money, or poor attitude of health worker.

Accessibility & Availability

Depending on the area a person lives in, some treatments might be available without other forms of treatments. Therefore, a patient is limited to what is accessible and available to them when seeking treatment for a disease.

Social Determinants of Health and Health-Seeking Behaviour

The World Health Organization defines the social determinants of health as the "conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age" In 2011, the World Health Organization argues, "the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels" creates these conditions. Socio-Economic Status (SES), gender, race, and education are factors of health-seeking behaviour that are influenced by the social determinants of health.

Socio-Economic Status (SES) and Health-Seeking Behaviour

A study, done by O'Neil (1989) stresses the importance of the "social relationship" between a doctor and patient in his article, The cultural and political context of patient dissatisfaction in cross-cultural clinical encounters. O'Neil explains that an unequal distribution of power and knowledge of health leads to patients being unsatisfied with their health care provider, which in turn leads patients to stop seeking treatment.

Gender and Health-Seeking Behaviour

According to Lazarus (1994), the difference between gender roles is significant in the patterns of health-seeking behaviour between men and women. According to Currie and Wiesenberg (2003), women tend to engage in less health-seeking behaviour compared to their male counterparts. In their article, Currie and Wiesenberg (2003) highlights three components of a woman's decision-making process for seeking healthcare. Firstly, women generally are less likely to identify disease symptoms in the first place. Women might shrug of symptoms as normal everyday muscle aches or normal regular occurrence. To be able to recognize and identify a health problem, one needs to have some form of knowledge and awareness of symptoms and illnesses. Secondly, women tend to belief that they are more restricted compared to their male counterparts in terms of health care accessibility. This is due largely to cultural ideas about the social value of women, which is lower compared to men. Thirdly, women do not engage in healthcare treatments even if they recognized that they have a health problem (Currie and Wiesenberg, 889) This is partly due to restricted accessibility to health services given the social roles of women, which may limit their ability to visit healthcare facilitates when they are open during the day.

Culture and Health-Seeking Behaviour

Factors such as cultural values and gender roles are significant in influencing the decision making process associated with health-seeking behaviour (Tung, (2010). Asian-American cultures, for example, are strongly influenced by Confucian doctrines, which emphasized the importance of "interdependence," "collectivism," and "familism" (Tung, 536). These values reinforce the expectation of individuals to place the needs of the family before their own, which may discourage them to pro-actively seek healthcare in a timely manner. Furthermore, these values of Asian-American cultures suggest that physical and mental distress are family problems, rather than an individual ones meaning that they should not be revealed to

people outside their kin (Tung, 536). Seeking help from health care professionals or seeking financial aid from the government to pursue treatment would be exposing the problem beyond their family network, which is considered shameful and could pose a threat to the status or reputation of the family. Consequently, Asian-American people tend to turn to family members before pursuing external help, thereby delaying the act of seeking professional health care (Tung, 537).

Implications for the Healthcare System

It is important for health care professionals to understand the different factors that affects an individual's decision to seek healthcare treatments. This is to ensure that professionals are better able to recommend treatments that are appropriate to the individual, so as to promote health-seeking behaviours, instead of providing options that patients might not feel comfortable with, because of social norms or values. Having knowledge of the roles that cultural beliefs and gender roles play in terms of health-seeking behaviour, can help healthcare providers improve their relationship (professional-patient relationships) and develop strategies to encourage people to seek appropriate treatments as soon as possible.

Stigma and Health-Seeking Behaviour

Goffman (1963) describes stigma or social devaluation "as a mark of social disgrace" often leading others to see us as untrustworthy, incompetent, or tainted. Gender, race, social status, mental and physical health are issues vulnerable to stigma. It is important to note that some cultures, or individuals feel that seeking treatment is a shameful thing because it's akin to announcing to public that you have an illness. Therefore, education is needed to break this negative stigma in order to increase health-seeking behaviours. For example, people in Asia are usually reluctant to seek professional counselling or help because they are afraid that their friends and family might shun away from them, thinking that they are "crazy".

Exigency of Health-seeking Behaviour in Mountain Prayer *Ori-Oke*

The religious perception of modern medicine buttresses the first delay which involves making decisions to seek medical attention. Such beliefs are further supported by the belief that going to the clinic, or hospital shows lack of faith in God. Religious leaders, who have the privilege of teaching congregants are strong merchants of these beliefs as reflected in the following quote: "How do you run to people as if God has failed? Why trust in man more than God? You are saying God cannot help you yet we know He is the almighty. If you are strong in your faith, you wait for God". In the light of dedication to religion displayed by most followers of apostolic sect members, such beliefs are likely to have a huge toll on maternal practices as well. The interpretation of injury, sickness and pregnancy complications is also very spiritual in mountain prayer. Apostolic sect members, perhaps just like many other religious people, believe that everything that happens to a person originates from the spiritual realm. Human health has a spiritual genesis and accidents, injury and illness are spiritually connected (Kenneth, Marvellous and Stanzia, 2016).

In line with the above, mountain prayer is open to anyone from any denomination. It is a place where men of God come to regularly to receive power before holding special programmes in their respective churches. Also, individuals with various spiritual problems come for deliverance. A lot of men converge in the place, because that was where the idea of visiting mountain for prayer started. *Ori-Oke* (Mountain Prayer) may not sound like the most thrilling of tourist attractions, but its landscape surrounded by open fields and farmlands is ideal for scenic interrogation of nature. It is, at times, hidden in a forest with large meadows and beautiful views. It provides a beautiful escape from urban life. In fact, human beings don't need to break banks to embark on spiritual pilgrimage to some *Ori-Oke* in Nigeria for medical attention, or any form of societal problem affecting human life.

To show the holiness of mountain prayer, no visitor is allowed to wear his or her shoes, be that person the president, governor or a traditional ruler. As such, people visit these mountains known in local parlance as *Ori-Oke* for various reasons such as for a breakthrough, the mercy of God and to spend some time with God. Some go there to spend days, while others spend weeks. In fact, some even stay for months on the mountain top, claiming they are there either for spiritual rejuvenation, soul purification, re-awakening, resuscitation or healing, among others. A lot of people, who ordinarily, do not have any business being at the mountain also find their way there. These characters, probably, far outnumber those with genuine intentions and sincerity of purpose.

Furthermore, in term of sacredness and sanctity of mountain prayer, it is obviously ungodly to steal other persons' property so as not to invoke the anger of God. This is one of the reasons why people keep most of the mountain prayer clean all the time. In this regard, to spit, litter, defecate, deconsecrate or wash anything on the rock; to discuss politics, religion or tribal issues are totally prohibited; disturbing others with radio, handset music or other electronic gadgets are not allowed. Prayers offered should only be in the name of Jesus Christ. The rules also include, that only water or olive oil can be brought to the mountain for blessing, while using foul language, fighting and quarrelling are prohibited on most of the mountain prayer. Standing or staying at the extreme part of the mountain to pray may be highly dangerous. Furthermore, in most of the *Ori-Oke*, women must not wear men's clothes, and they must not sleep together on the same mat, or with the same wrapper on the mountain.

Conclusion

It can be observed from the foregoing discussion that, the importance of the socio-psychological discourse of health-seeking behaviour in mountain prayer cannot be overemphasized. This paper described socio-psychological thoughts, words or deeds that show how people address or petition a divine entity or force to the people's

health related issues generally. This paper further observed that, Health Belief Model is a simultaneous process used to encourage healthy behaviour among individuals who put themselves at risk of developing negative health outcomes. As such, person must evaluate their perceptions of susceptibility and severity of developing a disease. Then, it is necessary to feel threatened by these perceptions. Lastly the benefits of change must be weighed against the barriers to change behaviour in order to determine what action will be worthwhile.

This paper theoretically demonstrated how people's belief and practices in mountain prayer affect their health-seeking behaviour. This paper helped to clarify the vague association between the apostolic religion (especially when it comes to mountain prayer) The paper qualitatively reveal the connective factors affecting health-seeking behaviour ranging from demographic factors down to socio-psychological determinants, among others. Lastly, the existing spiritual health-seeking behaviour can be made safer by engrafting skilled workers and providing drugs, equipment and medical sundries. However, this should be done with a longer term objective of curbing religious extremism in the public health system.

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Chapter 20

The Concept of *Ori-Oke* Prayer: A Study of Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Prayer is an indispensable and important force that always brings believers of various categories together. People often ascribe greater importance to prayer on the mountain; to the extent that some opined that prayer can only be answered on the mountain and not in any other place. People do troop out in large numbers to the mountain to receive blessing and favour from God; even if their lives are not correct. In order to get relevant information on the topic, both primary and secondary sources of collecting data were used. Interviews were conducted from some members of Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain which served as primary sources. Similarly, materials from library and, archives were used for this work. Interpretative method of research analysis cannot be avoided because and opinions put in place by scholars were interpreted. However, it was observed that other Prayer Mountains have become a means of extortion, innumerable havocs are being perpetrated under the umbrella of religion on daily basis. It was also observed that prayer can be answered anywhere, not necessarily on a mountain. What is required is uprightness of the heart with God. It was recommended that: Prayer Mountains should not be turned to commercial or extortion centres and Prayer Mountains should not be established as an attempt of provide a way out to the economic recession in the country; rather leaders should have a genuine call.

Introduction

Prayer has often been the moving force in the lives of God's people in the Bible. To say prayer is not important is to underrate God. Prayer is very important to the Christian. The need to communicate with God can never be over-emphasized. It is important to note that

in contemporary times, especially in Africa, prayer has been an important force that always brings people together, irrespective of age, gender, race or discipline. Prayer, especially the corporate one, often allows each one to express his/her heart to God. Indeed, prayer is indispensable, though the act is not easily done. Prayer can be said by an individual, a fellowship, a church and even a group of churches (i.e. inter-denominations).

Great men in the Old and New Testaments prayed and received answers to their prayers. The church of the Apostolic Age was known for her indefatigable and answered prayer life, as well as oriented prayers. They were not unusually moved by any situation or circumstances. Anytime any challenge came, they always remembered the Lord's injunction; "Ask and it shall be given unto you" instead of allowing their problem to overwhelm them. Their unrelented prayer attitude paved way for them (Acts 4: 31-33; 12: 4-12, 16; 25-26). A prayerful church is indeed a powerful church (Fatokun, 2008: 142).

The Lord Jesus Christ did not mention a specific place of prayer. In a typical African or Yoruba context, mountains and hills are sacred places where shrines of gods and deities were located, and where prayers and sacrifices were offered. It is worthy to note that the African Independent Churches (AICs) might have borrowed from these acts. The members of churches of African Independent Churches make use of some hills and mountains as places of worship or saying solitary prayers. These places which are usually far removed from the hustle and bustle of life, are observed as sacred places. Churches, permanent structures or huts have been built on some of these hills with resident pastors, prophets, prophetesses living there to assist those who come there for spiritual assistance (Ayegboyin and Ishola, 1999: 78). It is pertinent to note the cultural influence on people's approach to the understanding of prayer.

A Brief Overview of Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain, Ibadan

Ibadan came into existence when Lagelu, the *Jagun* (commander-in-chief) of Ife and Yoruba general left Ile-Ife with a handful of his

people to found his own city, *Eba Odan,* which literally means "between the forest and plains"
(www.http://en.wikipedia.or/wiki/Ibadan, 1/10/2007). His Royal Highness, Sir Isaac Babalola Akinyele, the late *Olubadan* of Ibadan (*Olu Ibadan* means Lord of Ibadan), in his book on the history of Ibadan, printed out in 1911, claims that the first site was destroyed due to an incident of an attack launched against Ibadan by the Ijaiye community (www.http://enwiki.or/wiki/Ibadan). It was during the time the bands of Yoruba renegades began settling in the area towards the end of the 18th that the area became attractive for its strategic location which is between the forest and the plains. The community settlers began to increase in number, and spread. By the end of 1829, the Yoruba military had set up a major base in Ibadan. It expanded even further when refugees began arriving in large numbers from Northern Oyo, following raids by Fulani warriors. Ibadan became a British Protectorate in 1893; by then the population had grown to 120,000
(www.http://Africancities/netbadan/php/ibadhistory.php
1/10/2007).

Furthermore, the British developed their new colony to facilitate their commercial activities in the area. Ibadan grew into the major trading centres that it is today. In the field of education, the colonizers also developed the academic infrastructure of the city.

The transformation of this bushy town village is surrounded by mountain to what it is today began in 1925 when the founder of Cherubim and Seraphim had a vision about this sacred mountain. The vision as narrated by the *Baba Ori-Oke* (the father in charge of the mountain) Most Senior Apostle Rev. Pastor, Prophet Isaiah Omokunmi stated that late Moses Orimolade Tolase (founder of Cherubim and Seraphim Church) saw in that vision the present day Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain that *Malaika* (angel) often visited and that the footprints of the *malaika* would be seen on that mountain. So he sent three followers to go and find the mountain. When the trio got there, they met Ogunwole, whom by tradition had inherited his father's property. He welcomed them, but the trio could not get to the top of the mountain, but rather, they stayed at the base

The number of visitors increased to seven the following year, but the town that surrounded the mountain prevented them and by 1927 ten people came to the same mission and as God would have it, they were able to trace the *oju ese* (the foot print), as in the by Moses Orimolade Tunolase, vision.

The discovery of the followers that visited the mountain marked the beginning of the steps that made the mountain become a pilgrimage or tourist centre. By 1935, fifty people gathered to worship on the mountain led by Moses Orimolade Tunolase, who anointed some servants of God into different offices. Since 1935 what is known in Yoruba as *Ajodun* began which is an annual event to commemorate the installation of servants of God into offices, and this comes up in the last week of October each year.

Some Ethical Issues on *Olorunkole Akinyele* Prayer Mountain

Some ethical issues guide the use of the mountain. These guidelines caution users of the mountain. These ethical issues have traditional undertone, they have their roots in African Traditional Religion. The ethical issues include:

1. Removal of shoes before climbing the mountain. This is borne out of entering into herbalist home which is a tradition to remove shoes.
2. Women on menstrual period cannot climb the mountain. This is borne out of the fact that women with menstruation cannot, traditionally speaking, either enter into the room where charms are kept in African Traditional Religion. It is believed that such menstruation always renders charms powerless – cf. Lev. 15; 12: 1-5, 7.
3. Male and female should not sleep together on the mountain. This is to avoid temptation of sexual immorality which in ATR, is forbidden in the power room of powerful people (cf. Lev. 18).
4. It is forbidden for any man to come to the mountain with another man's wife. It is believed in ATR that adherents must not do such things because if they do, they have disappointed the husband

of the woman; thus anything like charm he prepared would not work. For this reason and for quick answers to prayers, it is forbidden so as not to lead to temptation. In African Traditional Religion, if one goes to the herbalist with his concubine, they will not answer him for it is forbidden – cf. Lev. 18: 20).

5. Stealing is forbidden on the mountain. In fact all religions have this ethical view.

6. Using wrong vision to scatter families is not allowed. Ethically, the home is important in all religions.

7. No wandering/gossiping during the hour of prayer.

8. No chance for individual or denominational worship on the following days: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday night and Sunday morning. For all these, prayer times are called service of unity.

9. One cannot spend more than nine days on the mountain and if there is need, one must collect a letter from his/her church pastor. This is similar to obtains in ATR. This is to discourage the act of going from herbalist to herbalist.

10. Don't pass your faeces or urine around the mountain. This ethical issue can be linked to issues of health. It is believed that angels do visit the mountain, and it is God's commandment.

Activities on Olorunkole Akinyele Mountain

All activities on Olorunkole Akinyele Mountain are centred on prayer and of course thanksgiving as said by (Baba Idari Apo.) These activities include:

1. Prayer Session – Corporate and Individual
2. Ajodun (Anniversary)
3. Business Centre

Prayer session on Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain are taken serious. The reason being that it is believed that people come unto the mountain with problems, and so they must pray earnestly so as to combat the problems. Therefore, on the mountain, the hour

of prayer as found in the Bible is observed. These hours of prayers are scheduled as follows:

1. 3rd hour of prayer 9: 00 a.m.
2. 9th hour of prayer 1200 noon
3. 12th hour of prayer 3: 00 p.m.
4. 6: 00 p.m. every evening is separated for thanks.
5. 12: 00 a.m. The all-night prayer

All of these prayer sessions are being observed by all every day.

Corporate Prayer: Corporate prayer is a must on some days and hours of the day of the week as follows:

1. Wednesday and Friday morning between the hours of 9: 00 and 6: 00 p.m. No separate denominational groups or individuals during these hours of the day, and the worship centre is on the mountain top where Cherubim & Seraphim observe the "altar".
2. Saturday night is a time of corporate prayer session and all-night prayer session is observed at the same time.
3. Sunday morning service is also a joint act with different denomination and individuals on the mountain. It is used to unify all denominations that gather as it is referred to as "unity prayer".
4. Denominational corporate prayer also exists on the mountain and this can be said any time once it does not clash with the above mentioned ones.
5. Individual Prayer: This is left to the individual's ability and strength, especially when the individual is alone, nobody stops anyone from praying at any hour of the day.

Ajodun (Anniversary)

This is the festival or celebration to commemorate the establishment or the sighting of the mountain, and the consecration of promoted officers to spiritual offices. Adherents of Cherubim and Seraphim from every part of the country, and even beyond converge there for this *Ajodun* celebration. This festival comes up every last

week-end of October each year. This is commemorated between the last Friday and Saturday of every October.

Denominational heads from each Circuit, Area and Region gather there to grace the occasion. Ranks are displayed on these days ranging from the *Aladura,* to the Elder and to the highest rank of General Most Senior Apostle.

The Ajodun festival opens with songs of praise, and hymns from Cherubim and Seraphim Hymn book; prayer of Thanksgiving by seven people; prayer of forgiveness; prayer of invocation, message, prophecy, prayer for the nation, denomination, Christian Association of Nigeria, and the giving of testimonies attracting bountiful gifts from individuals whose prayers have been answered. The annual Ajodun festival gives joy and challenges when we see people appreciating God for what He has done for individuals on the mountain.

The hour of installation and receiving of staff of office is another glorious hour during the Ajodun festival. People of same rank are called including *Generals*, *Most Senior Apostles, Prophets, Revs, Baba Aladura Alao* to for anointing by the founder. However, because of old age, he is assisted by other denominational leaders. On touching their heads with anointing oil, 95 percent of the newly commissioned begin to prophecy, speak in tongues, displaying all sorts of spiritual gifts.

Testimonies on child bearing, overseas trips, contracts won, election victory, healing from diverse sicknesses (long term ailments), etc., with gifts ranging from cash to cloth, vehicles, etc. depending on the vow made during prayer, take the order of the day. There was a case of a wealthy couple who gave an eighteen seater bus in redemption of her vow which she made after 18 years of marriage without the fruit of the womb.

Business Centre

No-one is surprised to see how women (food vendors), children, etc., are hawking pure water, minerals, etc. at the sellers' arena. Sellers' arena is directly opposite the mountain. A kiosk is built with bamboo

and roofed with iron sheets. Every type of food is available for sale as well as music in records, audio and visual.

Distinctive Features of Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain (APM)

The distinctiveness of Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain cannot be overlooked which also makes it an academic worthwhile. Some of these are as follows:

1. *Ojuse Ese Malaika* (The Footprint of the Angel): As mentioned earlier, Prophet Moses Tolase Orimalade, the founder of Cherubim and Seraphim Movement, had the vision of an angel visiting the mountain. The footprints of different sizes of human beings can still be seen at the mountain (Alao, interview). This area is not known to many of the people who visit the mountain. However, prophets and other important personalities pray at that area.

2. *Oju Olorunkole* (The Cave of Olorunkole): It is believed that the angel stayed there and that God spoke to people there when they were praying. This cave is forbidden to women, to maintain its sacredness.

3. *Omi Olorunkole* (Olorunkole Water): On the top of the mountain, there is a hole where water gushes out. This water is referred to as *Omi Olorunkole*. This water is used for healing, purification, business blessing, anything one's heart desires, etc. It is believed that one does not take the water with drugs. Women do not fetch water from the spot, but a man has to fetch the water around 1: 00 a.m. when everyone would have dropped his/her container by the side. This water dries up during the dry season, but water is always fetched in advance and poured into the hole believing that it will do what is expected of it.

4. Altar (*Pepe*): The 'altar' is sacred placed divided into four. Each of these demarcations has its own importance.

i. *Aaye Omi ati Ororo* (The place of water and oil). This is the area whereby the water fetched at *Omo Olorunkole* will be put down

for blessing after every hour of prayer by the prophets and aladura; everybody can visit this place.

ii. There is another area within the altar area where one without prayer garment cannot exceed, no matter one position in the denomination or society.

iii. Elder Women Area: This is meant for elderly women who are no longer menstruating. This had African Traditional Religion similarly.

iv. The altars of prophets and other servants of God. This is the area where people on the programme are found.

v. The Preaching Pulpit: This is where the preacher and the *Baba Aladura* stand to preach and bless the congregation.

vi. Mercy Land (*Ile Aanu*): This is common to all African Indigenous Churches and at Mountain of Olorunkole. There is a place called *Ile Aanu* (Mercy land) which all denominations there use. It is believed that when one is there, one receives mercy for whatever one asks God for.

vii. Wilderness (*Iju*): This is a sacred and consecrated place for the use of great men of God and important figures in the society. The great men of God go there to pray and anyone can join them there in corporate prayer. But important dignitaries such as governor, president, senators, professors, business men, etc., also will join the corporate prayer because their presence with district worshippers adds colour to the programme.

viii. Cross: At the Olorunkole Mountain, the cross as a symbol of the death of the Lord, Jesus Christ, is a common place.

ix. White Colour: The belief is that God is pure and the garment of prayer is also white; the area must be kept pure and neat, and so also only white candle is accepted on the mountain.

Relevance of Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain in Contemporary Time

The relevance of Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain cannot be over-emphasized. It helps Christians to have more faith in Christ Jesus, because there are many people who come back rejoicing

because of what God has done for them through their pilgrimage to the Olorunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain. Even Christians and non-Christians who can see people testifying to God's goodness on the mountain, now have deeper faith in Christ Jesus. It provides avenue for self-discipline. Discipline is necessary for one as a Christian. When one visits the mountain it requires one to abstain from sex for some days before going there. Fasting is one of the disciplines that one should subject himself to before and after the programme.

Also, it helps to arrest the attention of Christians who may not have time for church services all the times. Many people in our contemporary time are so busy, and if such a mountain is available they can go there to worship.

It promotes Christian unity. If not because of white garment that the Cherubim and Seraphim, as well as Celestial Church of Christ put on, people in mufti and other denominations such as CAC, CCC and C & S and Pentecostals, even Orthodox Church members worship together at the time of unity service. This could be seen in the corporate hour of prayer of Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. This brings all Christians together which is one of the means through which Ecumenical Movement can be promoted.

It also prepares some members for the ministry. On this mountain, some people are chosen to lead prayers and this helps them to discover their talents and gifts and they finally bow out for ministerial work.

It is worth noting that, it helps devout ones to come out of worldly worries and destruction characterising the hustle-bustle of the city. There is concentration when one gets to the mountain and embraces this the solitude way of prayer. When most people are at home, there are likely distractions from wife, children, business partners, customers, but while on the mountain one switches off his telephone for adequate concentration.

Furthermore, it develops the area, the village, hamlet into popular towns. For example, Akinyele village would have remained the same, but for the influence of some governors in the Southwest. The road linking the mountain has been tarred and electrified. The economic

activities of the area have been improved upon through the patronization by the people who come for prayers.

Finally, it serves as a source of living for many people by making their ends meet. From the main road to the mountain, okada riders ply the mountain, food vendors meet their needs in terms of food. School children are found on the mountain hawking pure water, coke, etc. just to make ends meet. Lock-up stalls are used as supermarkets with variety of daily needs. Christian booksellers, audio and visual cassette sales also boost the economy of the area.

Recommendations

There is no doubt that prayer should be part of Christian living, and should be indispensable to any Christian who means business with Almighty God. The paper took a brief history of Ololrunkole Akinyele Prayer Mountain, and considered its relevance to the contemporary time. Some ethical issues and activities on Prayer Mountains was also looked into. It is pertinent to give the following recommendations to all stakeholders, e.g. pastors, leaders of Prayer Mountains, church members, CAN and all Christians.

Pastors

1. Prayer should be taken very seriously accompanied with relevant theology and practice.
2. Prayer Mountain should not be turned to commercial centres where money is requested for certain types of prayer.

The Church

1. The Church should be aware of the necessity of biblical and authentic Prayer Mountains.
2. Emphasis should be placed on prayers in the church before moving to the mountain if need be.
3. Church members should pray for spiritual leadership in the course of selection of Prayer Mountain.

4. As much as possible, churches should use church auditorium for Prayer Mountain since God is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent, and He is not limited by time or space.

Leaders of Prayer Mountains

5. Any Christian leader who is led to establish a Prayer Mountain should ensure that God is leading him to do so.

6. Prayer Mountain leaders should avoid the love of money. They should pursue holiness, sincerity and faithfulness, realizing that every one of us shall give account for what we do (Rom. 14: 12).

Prayer Mountain leaders should not attribute the success or answers to prayer to themselves, but rather to God.

Christians in General

The Christian Association of Nigeria, as well as Christian Council of Nigeria which are the umbrella organisations of the Christian faith should monitor the establishment and purification of Prayer Mountains, to ensure viability and seriousness. Moreover, any erring leader in Prayer Mountains should be disciplined. Finally, every Christian should note that they are to demonstrate faith in God, and that not all that glitters is gold and the craze for miracles should be discouraged and curbed.

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Chapter 21

The Concept of *Ori-Oke* in United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA) in Olorunsogo Local Government Area of Oyo State

Adesupo Paul Adedotun

Abstract

In Christianity, issue that revolves round ***Ori-Oke*** *is a concept that is viewed with different perceptions. However, the concept has its source from the bible. Although, it is relative because it is not all Christians that believe in going to Prayer Mountain. At the same time, it is not all the churches that have Prayer Mountain. The thrust of the paper is to examine the concept of* ***Ori-Oke*** *in United Missionary Church of Africa in Olorunsogo local government area of Oyo state. The paper, therefore, adopts historical and empirical methods as tools. The paper postulates that* ***Ori-Oke*** *should not be seen as an end in itself, but a means to an end. To this end, the pastors and prophets of* ***Ori-Oke*** *as leaders should serve as true leaders to the attendees and they should eschew extortions and profiteering as part of activities of* ***Ori-Oke*** *by these leaders.*

Introduction

Man is a being that believes in the ultimate power of God in this universe. He believes that God created the world and everything therein; thereby looking for all means to associate or worship him. Thus, we can say that man is religious to a certain extent. This could be seen in the words of Idowu (1991, p. 2) who states that; "Religion is an inescapable involvement of every member of human race; we are all religious in the sense that we believe in the sacred and are committed to one faith or another". The fact that man is committed to one faith, or the other, makes him to look for all means to search for the face of the Lord. Meanwhile, one of the ways man uses to seek the face of the Lord is through prayer, which can be said in any

form. Christians, in particular, believe that prayer is a weapon to defend and encourage their life. Apart from this, it is believed that it can assist them to overcome problems and manage the crisis of life, which indicates that there is crisis in the world which man is trying to protect himself from.

In recent time, the way Christians respond to prayer is a little bit different from the period Christianity was introduced. In the past, there was a lukewarm attitude in the area of prayer in some of the Mainline Churches; revival is not all that pronounced and there was no vigil. But nowadays, they are very much fervent in prayer perhaps, because of awareness of the problems in the society. This paves way for many Christians to move from one area to the other to seek the face of the Lord. This makes someone to wonder if prayers cannot be answered at the corner of one's house; or at the church one attends? This is a new trend which Christians found themselves in recent time. Thus, this paper examines the dynamic concept of *Ori-Oke* in United Missionary Church of Africa in Olorunsogo local government area, of Oyo State.

The Origin of *Ori-Oke* Spirituality in South-Western Nigeria

The issue of Charismatic tendencies in Christendom cannot be overemphasized when it comes to *Ori-Oke* mountain and spirituality. The fact that the world is changing, so also the practices of religion by man are not static. In addition, the world we live in is full of mysteries which go beyond the reasoning of man, and that calls for close relationship between man and God. Though, when Christianity was introduced in Nigeria, it started through different denominations with different doctrines, but with a common goal that revolves round Jesus Christ as the personal saviour (Oyalana, 2000, p. 8).

In most of the mainline Churches that were first introduced by the Europeans, their beliefs revolved round Christ Jesus. No symbol of any kind was used by any of them, except baptism by total immersion or through sprinkling of water, and by the natural way of praying to God, either in the homes or the various churches. Considering the Indigenous Churches, apart from the belief they

have for God, there are some certain traits that could be attached with some of these Churches. For instance, Fatokun (2013: p. 75) said that, the Apostolic Church (T.A.C) and Christ Apostolic Church believe strongly in *Ori-Oke* when it comes to the aspect of prayer. Celestial Church of Christ believes in the power of water, perhaps, this may the reasons why most of the churches built by Celestial members are not far from river or streams. Apart from this, the Cherubim and Seraphim members believe in the power of burning candle (www.nairaland.com/1199809).

Christ Apostolic Church believes strongly in the use of *Ori-Oke* when it comes to the aspect of prayer. Fatokun 2013 opines that the issue of origin of the use of *Ori-Oke* in South-Western Nigeria, is traceable to the Church, which was regarded to have been founded by Joseph Ayodele Babalola. He was a steam roller driver by profession with the Public Works Department (P.W.D). While working on road construction at Igbara-Oke, a place situated between Ilesha and Akure, it was then he received his call to proclaim the Gospel. In addition, he was empowered to cure all manners of sicknesses through prayer and Omi-Iye.

The great revival that took place at Oke-Oye, Ilesha in 1930 brought the name of Babalola to a limelight and the name became popular in Nigeria. Today, the following mountains are traceable to Christ Apostolic Church (CAC); Ori-Oke Aanu (Mountain of Mercy) founded by Joseph Ayo Babalola, Ori-Oke Baba Abiye, Ede, was founded in 1944 by *Baba Akande* through a divine programme of Evangelist Mariam Oni of the Christ Apostolic Church. Ori-Oke Ikoyi at Erio Ekiti for men only was also founded by Joseph Ayo Babalola. Ori-Oke Alasepe was founded by Prophet G. A. Oyelami known as Baba Alasepe following the directive he received from God. Other Ori-Oke under the control of CAC is Ori-Oke Irapada. In Ibadan, there is Ori-Oke Akinyemi, only men do go there to pray; there is also Ori-Oke Ido Ajinarere.

Furthermore, one pertinent question that comes to one's mind in respect of *Ori-Oke* is this: Are requests or prayers not granted in the Church? Are there any special things on the mountains (Ori-Oke)? Perhaps the issue may be traced to the Bible. What does Bible say

about *Ori-Oke*? In Exodus 19, in the wilderness of Sinai, Moses went up to God on the mountain to seek the face of the Lord on behalf of the Israelites, where God eventually gave him the Ten Commandments. In Genesis 22, the faith of Abraham was tested in the land of Moriah. God instructed Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains. In I Kings 18, scripture speaks about the contest on Mount Carmel, the story in the chapter centres on Elijah the prophet and King Ahab. They both met on Mount Carmel to test the God that is Supreme. On the mountain, Elijah prayed and God answered him by fire. In I Kings 19: 1-18, Elijah the prophet still had an encounter with Jezebel the wife of King Ahab. On Mount Horeb, God instructed Elijah to stand on the Mount, and He (God) passed by, and a great and strong wind shook the mountain and broke in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind, there came earthquake after the wind, but the Lord was not in it. This was followed by the fire and after the fire came a still. This signifies that mountains are reputable places used by God to show His power to His people, and a means of protection when people separate themselves to seek the face of God. In the New Testament, Christ also used the mountain. In Matthew 5, Christ taught the crowds on the Mountain, the teaching of Jesus on the mountain was referred to as the "Beatitudes". Apart from this, it was on the mountain he was transfigured before the three apostles that he took along (Peter James and John). This explains that Christ saw mountain as a place where one could dedicate himself to God and a place where one could meditate with in His word.

The Concept of *Ori-Oke* in United Missionary Church of Africa

Storm (1958, p. 178) asserts that, United Missionary Church of Africa is one of the Mainline Churches in Nigeria. The Church was started in Nigeria in 1905, through the effort of Mennonite Brethren in Christ, in Canada. In 1919, the Church got o Igbeti, the headquarters of Olorunsogo Local Government Area in Oyo State. In 1921, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ changed its name to United Missionary Society (UMS). In 1955, the name was changed to

United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA) after wide consultations among the members of church in Yorubaland, Nupeland and Hausaland in Nigeria.

As part of the beliefs and practices of the church, UMCA believes that the Holy Spirit plays the roles of convicting, calling, regenerating, assuring and sanctifying the people. In essence, the Church believes in the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit which deals with each believer in a unique way. Ishola (2002, p. 5) added that, the Church also believes in the immersion type of baptism, which is seen as the one of the ways to recognize a believer with Christ, and a means of confession of one's sin publicly. Other beliefs of the Church could be seen in the areas of divine healing, act of speaking in tongues and prayer.

At the point of the introduction of the Church in the Nigeria, there was nothing like *Ori-Oke*. The believers in the Church prayed to God in their houses, churches and places of work. At that period also, there was nothing like vigil and strong revival. The system of prayer involved the one that would be said in silence. On many occasions during the service, the prayer was usually led by an elder or a person in the Church. There was no opportunity for each member to say his/her prayer the way he/she likes during service. But the irony of life at that period was that, the church progressed and witnessed little or no problem, but with less spiritual development.

Meanwhile, issues of civilization, modernization and modern technology have changed the orientation of many members in the church, especially the youths. In the mid-eighties, some of the youths in the church who received their higher education outside the local government realized the need for the church to change its orientation in the area of prayer. Reasons behind this could be the result of poverty, awareness of evil or satanic power in the society, enmity among church members and families. Thus, one can say that the church has not recorded much in the area of spiritual growth of the members. Irene (2004, p. 35) corroborates this when he submits that "there has been a proliferation of charismatic movements since the 1980s. Their growth has been due to the spiritual stagnation of the mainline churches on the one hand, and the breakdown of law and

order, on the other hand, due to the disruption in the society created among other factors by a corrupt government".

Realizing the fact that some of the youths in the church are moving out to join the Pentecostal churches in the society, the church, at its district conference held on 15 December, 1989 decided to change some certain things in the order of worship. This could be seen in the areas of prayer, signing, vigil and revival. This study believes that the era of proliferation of churches and fellowship groups has greatly changed the system of worship of UMCA members in the Olorunsogo Local Government Area. Today, believers are more fervent in prayer than before; there is enthusiasm for vigils and revival in the Church.

As noted by Ojetola in an interview conducted with him, UMCA in Olorunsogo did not have a specific mountain *Ori-Oke* being dedicated for prayer as we have in CAC. The church regards the 'altar' as her *Ori-Oke*; the belief is that God is there and there is nothing they ask in good spirit that will not be granted unto them. He added that the revival ground is also seen as Ori-Oke. He reiterates further that the church does not have any contrary opinion to any of the church using *Ori-Oke* for prayer session, since the source of using Ori-Oke is from the Bible. Aderonmu added that, UMCA does not believe in any symbol when it comes to the issue of prayer. He noted further that their belief revolves round the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Hence, UMCA in Olorunsogo Local Government Area does not have a physical mountain *Ori-Oke* for prayer, other than the altar and the prayer ground/revival. But Ojerinde posits that, many of the church members do attend other Ori-Oke in the area. This is not to say that their prayers are not granted in UMCA, but, because of the zeal some have for prayers, and the belief that ceaseless prayers are needed to combat the battle of life, many turn to *Ori-Oke*. In recent times, issue of lukewarm attitude to vigils and prayer is now a thing of the past in UMCA in Olorunsogo Local Government Area. The church has turned Pentecostal in the aspect of reviving its members. Another thing to note among some of the youths in the church is that, some have moved out of the church on the pretence of receiving

the call, and have established their own church and *Ori-Oke* where people go for prayer. Olorunsogo Local Government Area is a place that is surrounded by many Hills such as Iyamopo, Santo, Erugba Sino, Obadimo, Okin, Agbele, Sagbo, Jangbata, Ofo, Opetolu, Omo Sanda Oke Esin, Apite, Aboyun-Ogun, Ojutaye and the hosts of others (Ogunbiyi, 2011, p. 28). Before and after the advent of Christianity in Olorunsogo Local Government Area, the adherents of African Religion worship the spirits of Iyamopo, Santo, Erugba, Sino and Obadimo hills.

Recently, the wave of change had greatly influenced the people of the area especially Christians by turning some of the mountains/hills in the community to *Ori-Oke* (mountain prayer). In Olorunsogo Local Government Area, Okin hill is regarded to be the assembly ground for all Christians on Easter day for their prayer. The top and base of Iyamopo hill has also been turned to a place of entertainment and prayer for the youths and the aged in the community. In fact, during the Easter period, series of goods, materials and food stuff can be purchased at the ground. Apart from this, there are some mountains that have been turned to *Ori-Oke* for prayer in the community. Hills like, Mountain Zion, which is located behind state hospital in Igbeti, Ori-Oke Kara located along Igbeti-Kisi road, Ori-Oke Okin, behind Ori-Ade compound in Igbeti, Ori-Oke Aboyun-Ogun, situated at Ayetoro area of the community are prayer spots (Ajayi, 2017). Others are Oki and Aperu hills which are located behind Oke-Ibukun and Aperu areas, respectively. In most of these mountains, there are some that are being co-ordinated by UMCA pastors, if invited, and other pastors from Pentecostal Churches in the local government. The essence of this is to seek the face of the Lord, and at the same time, secure as an effective charismatic revolution, which is a challenge to most of the mainline churches in the society.

The Need for *Ori-Oke* in UMCA

Christians and non-Christians in Olorunsogo Local government hold the view that man is in the society where things are changing

every day. It is also believed that human beings are in the era where the impact of civilization and modernization can be felt, either in positive or negative form. Moreover, life is full of mysteries which even go beyond the understanding of man. The fact that man believes in the ultimate power of God makes him to search for His face. Man as a religious being seeking the face of the Lord for so many reasons.

One of the good reasons why people recognize *Ori-Oke* in UMCA is to pray for deliverance from the hand of oppressor. It is obvious that there are lots of problems that surrounded human being. Most of these problems cannot be seen; there are enmity and evil powers in the society. The only way to attack/fight the evil-doers is through prayer. Irene (2004, p. 35) said that, the emphasis of crusades, and prayer meetings was on the power of Jesus Christ to redeem his people and society from the demonic forces seeking to destroy both the people and the society, in as much as Africans always find spiritual explanations for physical problems being encountered.

Another reason that makes UMCA members to attend *Ori-Oke* for prayer is divine healing. In our society, there are good modern health care and facilities, there are areas whereby some sickness need divine healing or intervention. There are cases of sick people that have to be transferred from the hospital to the church or mountain before such person could recover from the illness. As earlier said in this work, this world is full of mysteries, and it is one of the reasons why people go to *Ori-Oke* to seek for protection.

In the New Testament, there are many miracles from the hand of Paul Acts 13: 11, Acts 14: 10 and miracles from Jesus Christ such as; turning, water into wine John 2: 9, Peter's mother-in-law was healed Matt. 8.14, the centurion's servant was healed, Luke 7: 2, Lazarus was raised from the dead, the woman with the issue of blood was healed Mark 6: 25. These and many others are what people read from the scripture and believe that it can happen in their own life.

Many people are interested in going to *Ori-Oke* with the aim that their problems shall be solved and be a thing of the past. Some move to *Ori-Oke* to seek for good children from God, some for employment opportunity, while the problems of some centre round

marital issue. Another area for consideration is prosperity, due to the fact that there is poverty in the society, many people decided to go to *Ori-Oke* to ask for wealth and for the way to be prosperous in life. As said before, UMCA in Olorunsogo does not have a specific mountain for prayer session as C.A.C. but make use of the church and the revival ground within the church premises.

In addition, each time a period for special prayer is announced or slated, members are usually present in the church. In the case for calling for special prayer, fasting always goes with it. Another important thing to note is that the door of the church is usually open for any member who wishes to pray when the service is not in progress. However, when asking for any request from God whether at *Ori-Oke*, or in the church, or at special ground designated for prayer, the most important thing is that one should present himself/herself to God with the mind of faith and with the spirit of humility. Meanwhile, the trend of new change has led to the UMCA members and their pastors joining other churches to pray on mountains set aside for prayer in the community.

Recommendations

It is in the light of the foregoing that this work recommends the following:

- There should not be condemnation of any place one chooses to pray his/her God.
- *Ori-Oke* should not be an end itself but a means to an end
- Extortion of the congregation should not be the practice of pastors or prophets in *Ori-Oke*.
- The life of prophets at *Ori-Oke* should be a model for the community.
- Believers should go before the Lord with the heart of sincerity
- It is good for the pastors/prophets not to say anything on behalf of God when God has not spoken.

- Believers should be dedicated to their God and be careful in moving from one *Ori-Oke* to another. This may prevent them from falling into the hands of false prophets.

Conclusion

This work had been able to consider the dynamic concept of *Ori-Oke* in UMCA in Olorunsogo Local Government Area. It was deduced from the work that *Ori-Oke* is a place that is separated apart for prayers among Christians, and, takes its source from the Bible. As good as *Ori-Oke* is to many churches and Christians, the work opines that any place chosen by any church as *Ori-Oke* should be used judiciously for the purpose it is meant for. It should be for the glory of God and be regarded as holy.

In addition, the fact that many people do troop out to *Ori-Oke* for prayer, does not mean that they are more righteous or holier than most people that use their church as *Ori-Oke*; it all depends on the practice of the church, her mission and the inspiration received from God. On whether or not prayer cannot be answered in a particular place involves or requires the faith of the believers. It is obvious from the study that most people go to *Ori-Oke* or church to look for solution to the problem(s) of their life. However, there are some that go to *Ori-Oke* seeking the face of the Lord for the renewal of their life.

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Chapter 22

Between Rhetoric and Reality: The Place of *Ori-Oke* and Spirituality among Ilorin Christians

Olowonibi Femi

Abstract

It is worthy of note that spirituality entails the whole of human efforts to live in conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy spirit within a community. Thus, this spiritual clarity is so closely connected with Ori-Oke in Ilorin Metropolis. In point of fact, Ori-Oke was established by the effort of the Aladura Churches in Ilorin. The objective of this paper, therefore, is to state the effect of Ori-Oke among Christians in Ilorin. The methodologies employed for this study are historical, descriptive and analytical to make clarification of the study. Interviews were conducted to elicit information concerning Ori-Oke and Christians in Ilorin, which leads to the fact that these efforts among others, include fostering of unity among various Christians denominations, securing a Holy place where men of God consecrated, refurbished, rekindled and received power leading to higher spirituality when praying. This paper postulates that despite the short comings of Ori-Oke, the whole of human efforts will be seen in the light of conscious relationship that comes from God. To this end, the paper concludes that the place of Ori-Oke and spirituality among Ilorin Christians should be properly interrogate to give a comprehensive spirituality in context of their activities in Ori-Oke.

Introduction

Mention cannot be made of the activities of Christianity in Ilorin the capital city of Kwara State without making reference to mountain prayers. This has become an integral part of Christian worship in the city. Omotoye and Omolara (2010: 3) observed that:

Religion is an essential part of human; it is a phenomenon to be observed daily. There is constant communication between man and God the creator. In spite of the changing effect of science and technology, God is constant and in charge of human daily life. However, the mode of worshipping God is changing daily.

It is in the light of the above that Christians in Ilorin metropolis promote *Ori-Oke* spirituality and this has become one of their *modus operandi*. It is important to note that Christianity is a means by which communication is established between man and God.

It is interesting to note the interplay between *Ori-Oke* and Christian spirituality in Ilorin metropolis. The major thrust of this paper is to critically examine the place of *Ori-Oke* in the spirituality of Christians in Ilorin. This paper concludes by making some recommendations on the relationship between *Ori-Oke* and Christians in Ilorin, which forms part of the basis of their beliefs.

Conceptual Clarifications of Prayer Mountains and Spirituality

In the context of the study, it is important to clarify some terms for the purpose of more knowledge and understanding. *Ori-Oke* and Prayer Mountain shall be interchangeably used. The question may be asked, what is Mountain? Mountain could be defined as a very high hill often with rocks at the top. And what is prayer? The word prayer according to Flory (1984: 6) means "a solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or another deity". Therefore, Prayer Mountain means a solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God on top of the hills.

The term "spirituality" can be interpreted in different ways. Weneka, (2001: 19) observes that spirituality in its relation to religion is a phenomenon of human concern. Stein (1994: 19) asserts that spirituality is all about people as well as beliefs and practices. Auman (1974: 108) on his part correctly defines spirituality in its widest sense as referring "to any religious or ethical value that is concretizes as an attitude of spirit from which one's action flow. To Sheldrake (1998: 34) sees spirituality as the whole human effort to live in the light of conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy

Spirit within a community. To cap it all, Aylward Shorter (1988: 34) sees spirituality as a word derived from *spiritus*. The life giving force which stems from God, quickens the baptized Christians and transforms the relationship he has with fellow human being. At this juncture, it is necessary to delve into historical background of *Ori-Oke* and its spirituality in Ilorin.

A Historical Background of *Ori-Oke* in Ilorin

At the beginning of the 19th Century, Ilorin was a border in the North East of Oyo Empire, with mainly a Yoruba population, but with many Hausas and Fulani immigrants. It was the headquarters of Oyo General, Afonja, who rebelled against the empire with the help of the Fulanis. The rebellion was empowered by Nupe and Borgu Muslim slaves. Afonja was being assisted by Salih Janta also called Shehu Alimi a leader of the local Fulani.

According to Danmole (1982: 77), what is important is that Salih's visit to Ilorin affected the subsequent history of Ilorin. First his presence was associated with the flocking to Ilorin of many Muslims not only from Yorubaland, but also from Hausaland. The visit of Al-Salih marked the gradual decline and eventual fall of Afonja. He gradually lost control over his supporters which later resulted in his liquidation and in 1824, Afonja was assassinated and Alimi son Abdulsalami became an Emir and Ilorin became an emirate of Sokoto Empire. This development had led to the growth of Islamic learning and development in Ilorin.

Subsequently, Ilorin became the state capital of Kwara in Western Nigeria. It had a population of 777,661, making it the sixth largest city in Nigeria by population. Although, the city retains a strong Islamic influence from the Northern incursion, Christianity is now practised in the city due to the significant immigration from other parts of Kwara State and other parts of Nigeria to the city (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2016).

Ever before now, an attempt to establish Christianity in Ilorin was rebuffed. Samuel Ajayi Crowther's several attempts at

establishing Christianity in Ilorin was resisted (Luke, 1978: 89). Adamolekun (2002) in his work narrates that:

The first attempt made to establish the Baptist Mission in Ilorin was in 1855. Between 1855 and 1860 Bowen made several abortive attempts to establish Baptist Church in Ilorin because this was met with very stiff resistance was built in consonance with the directive of the Emir of Ilorin Shitta. The Emir saw Christianity as a threat to Islam. The Emir had the view that Islam was sufficient for the moral upliftment of the people.

It was not until 1939 that First Baptist Church was established at the house of Fayomi Ajani's house at Ita Ogunbo. Adamolekun informed that "hence, geographically, the place of worship was moved because they were greatly persecuted at Ita Ogunbo by the Muslims, as they were not wanted in Ilorin city. At this instance, they contacted the Emir for a land and reluctantly the Emir, AbdulKadir I, gave them a land that Adamolekun, referred to as, "an unwanted eye" of that Emir the church was located at the outskirt of the town (Adamolekun, 2002).

The second phase of the establishment of Christianity in Ilorin was not without the effort of African Independent Churches, to be precise, known as Aladura Churches. These Churches, according to Omotoye and Omolara (2010) include Cherubim and Seraphim Churches (C&S), Church of Christ Church (CCC), of the Lord (Aladura), Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Celestial Church of Christ (CCC). Prominent among these *Aladura* churches in Ilorin was Christ Apostolic Church. The Ilorin Church was one of the indirect fruits of the 1930 great revival conducted by Apostle Ayodele Babalola, (Adedairo 2004: 30). To support the above view Adeyemi and James (2009: 194) succinctly express that the revival spread like a wide fire throughout the country. The unprecedented expansion of the CAC Movement led to the emergence of many great Ministers, and hence, the establishment of many branch assemblies, one of which was the Ilorin branch.

The founding of Christ Apostolic church, Oke Isegun, Ilorin did not happen as a result of the direct evangelistic campaign of the founding father of the church, Apostle Ayodele Babalola. The church

in Ilorin started by the leading of the Holy Spirit, when one Prophet Alagbami came from Offa to Ilorin for a revival programme in July 1947. Hence the church started in a very small way in the house of Elder Ikuforiji who was then staying at Opo-Malu quarters. They started with morning and evening prayers meeting. People brought problems and challenges like diseases, bareness, demonic attacks and there were records of supernatural intervention of God (Adedairo, 2004: 37).

As usual, the Muslims around Opo-Malu were uncomfortable with the way they shout in prayer and conducted their services. Persecutions arose, many allegations were levelled against the church, and the main one was that they were disturbing the peace of the area and that their prayers were too much. Onwochei (2007: 4) says that "prayer was seen as the bedrock of their practice and doctrine as well as the channel of blessing and success. As a result of their hot prayer system, some of these churches were referred to as *Aladura* Churches. As *Aladura* churches they have penchant for prayers such that the reigning Emir directed the Church to be relocated with immediate effect in early 1949. Later the church secured a land at the old Oyo by pass, now Ibrahim Taiwo Road.

The persecution and hostile attitude of the Muslims towards Christianity in Ilorin, led to the use of Prayer Mountain known in the local parlance as *Ori-Oke*. As for the Christ Apostolic Church, part of their doctrine is evangelism in accordance with (Mathew 28: 28-29). They were aware that one of the callings of the church, and that of Babalola, one of her founders is evangelism or soul winning. They, therefore, put it upon themselves that if they wanted to survive and spread the gospel and win soul, there was the need for prayer. Ekoh Noblebe moans "they remembered the role played by Apostle Ayo Babalola whenever he went out to plant any church. He would look for a Prayer Mountain where he would pray for the power of God to suppress and consume every spiritual power different from the power of God that was affecting the community where he went. Therefore, the church put it into practice to locate mountains where they could pray and suppress the spiritual power militating against the spread of the gospel in Ilorin metropolis.

It is germane to state that seven mountains were located in Ilorin Municipal community and these include:

1. Sobi Mountain
2. Basin Mountain or *Ori-Oke* Basin (taken over by C&S Authority)
3. Ibudo Effo Mountain (generally known as Michael Imodu Mountain)
4. *Ori-Oke* Alagbede, Olunlade, Ilorin (taken over by C.A.C Authority)
5. Ita Elepa Mountain
6. Tanke Mountain
7. *Ori-Oke* Anu (Mountain of Mercy, Kwara State House of Assembly)

The members of the Christ Apostolic Church constituted themselves into prayer warriors to fight and pray against the incessant hostile attitude of their host communities. They believed that on those mountains their prayer was speedily granted. However, the then Emir now allotted land to them to build their church. By and large, after the construction of their church building, they began fasting and prayer programmes on the mountain. That was the beginning of *Ori-Oke* prayers in Ilorin.

Apart from the above, the Cherubim and Seraphim church which was also an *Aladura* churches was not left out in going to the mountains for prayer. Oyebode (2013: 154-155) points out that the Cherubim and Seraphim Church was brought to Ilorin during one of Captain Abiodun Akinsowon Evangelistic campaign. The church in Ilorin was headed by Baba Medos, a staff of John Holt Company. The first church meeting of the church was held in a sitting room of Baba Medos in 1935. When Baba Medos was transferred to Oshogbo by John Holt Company, Baba Oshinloye who was not a member of Cherubim and seraphim church, but a staff of John Holt, replaced him. At this point, the leadership of the newly formed church fell on Baba Lanjorin ably assisted by Baba Aderinokun. According to senior Apostle Daniel, the church also witnessed some form of persecution. Since the likes of Moses Orimolade made use of *Ori-Oke* for prayer,

others like Captain Abiodun Akinsowon of Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Ilorin used *Ori-Oke* Basin in Ilorin for spiritual assignment. The Trinity Salvation church also known as Igbala Apostolic Church did make use of *Ori-Oke* Basin for prayers. In fact, their church building was not far from the Basin Mountains.

Based on the above, Christians in Ilorin are used to going to the mountain for prayers. As we have mentioned above, all the seven mountains are patronized by most Christians in Ilorin. The origin of the *Ori-Oke* came to being in Ilorin as a result of persecution, and the perception that *Ori-Oke* was a place of prayer where miracle, deliverance and victory are wrought were remarkable without any hindrance from the community

Christian Attitude towards *Ori-Oke* in Ilorin

The Christian attitude towards *Ori-Oke* in Ilorin is positive and obvious. It is very glaring that Christians in Ilorin are used to going to the mountain for prayer. As we have mentioned earlier, all the seven mountains within Ilorin community were patronized by some Christians in Ilorin. For example, Kayode Olatunji of God's Army Ministry, A.K.A Sword of Deliverance Ministry, Lao Area, says that the General Overseer of the Church does take his member to *Ori-Oke* Sobi on every second Saturday of the month and in December for prayer. Also, Prophetess Esther Yemisi Faniyi of Ifesowapo Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Sawmill Area, stated that she couldn't do without going to *Ori-Oke* because it is the leading of the Holy Spirit. She said three women went into a trance in their church and they spent seven days at *Ori-Oke* Basin, and various revelation were related.

Furthermore, Mrs. Blessing Oladele of Christ Apostolic Church Oke Iyanu, Egbejila Area, explains that the man of God in charge of the church. Prophet Pastor Ogunwunmi does take them to *Ori-Oke* Anu (Mountain of Mercy) at Asa-Dam for consecration and concentration on spiritual assignment whenever they had a program, or if a member had a problem, the prophet of the church might organize a prayer on the mountain.

In addition, Mrs Akinrinola, a member of Christ Apostolic church, Oke Alafia, Agbo-oba Area, commented that their, Pastor Fadile, always took them to *Ori-Oke* Alagbede for prayer in accordance with the leading of the spirit. It has become a practice of the church to always visit the mountain every month for prayer. She, in fact, said that there was a time when a crisis reared up among the women in the church, it was on the mountain that they prayed, and God restored their peace.

In addition, Mrs. C.O Anjorin, a member of Arm of Saviour Apostle Gospel Ministry, A.K.A Opabida –Sobidire, said that apart from *Ori-Oke* in Ilorin metropolis, they do attend revivals, on *Ori-Oke* Baba Abiye in Ede for prayer and spiritual exercise, and that has been their constant practice in every quarter of the year. She said they also go to Ibudo-Efo Mountain known as Michael Imodu Mountain in Ilorin, for deliverance.

Also, Mr. Idowu James, a member of Christ Light of Salvation Gospel Mission in Airport Area, stated that every 4th Friday of the month they go to *Ori-Oke* Ikire for prayer. He said both male and female do not pray together then, and that there are different sections for women and men. According to him, miracles are received during this exercise. Furthermore, the Senior Pastor of Christ Favour and Mercy Gospel Proclaimer International Ministry, Ijooro Ayetoro Area, Prophet Owolabi commented that *Ori-Oke* was very significant in the life of a Christian. In fact, he said that Jesus, as Christian's role model, prayed on the mountain in Matthew 1: 1-13, and he was transfigured before his disciples. Therefore, it has become a trend and usual practice of the church at the beginning of the year to seek God's face, so that He can journey with the faithful throughout that year, and that they do spend three days on the mountain praying fervently.

From the foregoing, it is significant to note that the phenomenon of *Ori-Oke* prayer sessions and its contribution to the Christian spirituality, among Ilorin Christians cannot be over-emphasized. The Christians in Ilorin have shown of the importance of *Ori-Oke* to their spiritual growth either for rekindlement, refurbishment, and

consecration for power, blessing, wealth, or to prevent warding off evil through revelation received from the *Ori-Oke*.

The Effects of *Ori-Oke* among Christians in Ilorin

Prayer Mountains do not only provide a good environment for spiritual communication, but also promote multi-religious unity, going by its multi-religious participation. It is essential to note that one of the usual characteristics of *Ori-Oke* is the opening of *Ori-Oke* to any denomination. It is a place where men of God come to pray regularly to receive power before holding special programmes in their respective churches. It is not limited to any church.

A Prayer Mountain is seen as a place of holiness and, therefore, at the beginning of every year, men of God and members of the churches go to *Ori-Oke* to seek the face of God, to receive breakthrough, mercy of God and to spend some moments with God. Some go there to spend days and weeks, and some claim they are there either for spiritual purification, re-awakening, resuscitation and healing.

An interview conducted with Prophet Owolabi attests to this fact that at the beginning of the year, "I encourage members of my church to come and share moments with God on the mountain". A member of the church, Esher Oladipupo said that whenever she was facing challenges she went to the mountain for prayer and she had never been disappointed.

The positive effect of *Ori-Oke* is that miracle, deliverance and victory are wrought. Idowu James narrates that as a result of spiritual attack on him and his wife, each time his wife conceived, they went to *Ori-Oke* to lay all the challenges before God, and to the glory of God, that month, the wife became pregnant and gave birth to their miracle baby the same year.

Another significant effect of *Ori-Oke* is that it is a place of holiness. Psalm 24-34 corroborates to this when it says, "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in his Holy place? He who has a clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted his soul for Idol, nor sworn deceitfully" It is necessary to state that the

Prayer Mountain, which engenders a natural habitat for consecration, has been used by men of God. It is at this place they receive power of God. It is a place where they are refurbished and rekindled.

Moreover, it offers spiritual sanctuary for their occupants, and provides an almost direct link to God, and gives room for higher concentration when praying to avoid distraction. Prayer Mountain is believed to have been a natural habitat where mountainous problems are solved. Some people are seen dwelling on the mountain for certain problems. A visitor to the mountain said he came for prayer to retrieve his seized six container for several days of prayer. He said the most surprising thing was that "he received his breakthrough as his containers were released without paying a demurrage". Mr Ajide Faith, a member of King Jesus Assembly, said "the first time I visited the mountain, I opened my heart to God and today, I have a breakthrough in my finances. There is nothing you asked from God you won't get."

It is believed that prayer request receives fast answer from God to the person asking him for a miracle, and it is a place where one's destinies are reshaped. It is for this reason that people troop to the mountain to pray. Prophet Adanaogu, when interviewed, summed it up Yoruba saying "*Kádàráàti Àyànmọ́ kò gbóògùn ṣùgbọ́n ó gbọ́Àdúrà* meaning that destiny has no remedy but is amenable to prayer". He said further that: "I have seen people coming to the mountain with mountainous problem which received quick solution and answers. From this point of view the positive effect of *Ori*-Oke cannot be ignored.

On the first hand, good as *Ori-Oke* is, there are abounding negative findings that are inimical to the growth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which makes *Ori-Oke* to be a mockery. Samuel Gabriel unveils the point that a lot of people who ordinarily do not have business on the mountain also find their way there. He said further, these characters who have no genuine intention and sincerity of purpose visit this place though is supposed to be a holy ground. Many people with ulterior motives are violating the sanctity of the place." Recently, a young man tried to rape a lady on the mountain.

Many charlatans and pseudo-prophets are on the prowl on the mountains to deceive people to their game plans. These pseudo and charlatan prophets are predators waiting to bombard people with unwanted prophetic revelations to deceive them. A man was said to have fallen prey of a prophet who revealed to him an evil prophesy thereby breaking his home through the prophecy. According to our informant, he said the prophet declared that the man's wife was a witch who had not allowed the business of the man to grow. Hell was let loose, one can better imagine the aftermath of the events.

Finally, one of the negative effects that abound on *Ori-Oke* is that some of the prophets are not called, but they wanted to fill their belly. Even some do not have theological understanding of the word of God thereby teaching heresies, apostasies and misleading their adherents into wrong doing. One cannot imagine a prophet asking the member of the congregation under him to lick the sweat on his body for a miracle. Where is it written in the Bible that Jesus asked his adherent to lick his sweat? , One should be weary of this incident.

That emphasis being laid on the prevalence of witches as the cause of every ill-luck, misfortune, sickness and insecurity in every extended home, most especially in polygamous home is bringing about unnecessary fears, suspicion and enmity. The opportunity is also being used by some charlatan pastors to oppress and exploit the innocent members of the church, who are seeking possible solution to their problems. The observations above have been common occurrences at *Ori-Oke*. Many prophets and pastors have deceived and exploited lots of people.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing observations, we, therefore, recommend that

- It is important for cleric in charge of these mountains to enforce rules and regulations that should discourage distraction, immortality, proliferation of vices and illegal profiteering whether in cash or in kind by virtue of the Prayer Mountain.

- The Christian Association of Nigeria at local levels should send representatives to checkmate the activities of Christians on the mountains, so that innocent people would not be swindled and those that have no business being there should be stopped from going to the mountain.
- It is important for those that claim to be pastors, prophets, evangelist to go through a theological training, or be under the tutelage of known prophets to update their knowledge of true word of God. These would help in stopping heretic teaching and misbehaviour.

Conclusion

From the study so far, it has been acknowledged in this work that the use of *Ori-Oke* among Ilorin Christians has played a significantly role in their spiritual life, and this has positively impacted on their lives. In spite of the initial persecution and hostile attitude of Islam to Christianity in Ilorin, *Ori-Oke* has provided alternative means of meeting with God.

However, today, Christianity has developed in great proportion in Ilorin, and every denomination of Christianity, the mainline, *Aladura* churches and the Pentecostals are now well represented in the town. We want to conclude by saying that *Ori-Oke* is then occupying a prominent stage in meeting the spiritual need or an aspiration of the peoples in Ilorin.

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Interview with Evangelist Sunday Aboyede on 13th January 2017

Chapter 23

Mountain Worship and the Philosophical Conception: A Study of the Idoma on the Functions of Effigies and Symbols

Amali Otekwu Onche & Lemuel Ekedegwa Odeh

Abstract

The presence of Western education in Idoma society would have swayed the conception of Idoma persons from the significance of artefacts in the cultural makeup of Idomaland. Some Idoma believe that the use of effigies and other symbols are more efficacious when used at mountains, particularly for exorcisms. This study examined the philosophical conceptions of illiterate and literate Idoma persons of Central Nigeria, on the usefulness of effigies and symbols in Idoma society. It made use of descriptive survey method where 2700 Idoma illiterate and literate persons were sampled using simple random sampling technique. Researchers drew questionnaires, and interview schedule, while observation technique was also used for the data collection. Frequency counts, percentages and t-test were used for data analyses. The results showed that majority of Idoma literate and illiterate persons in Idoma communities regarded effigies and symbols as important traditional religious items for honouring the dead, and paying tribute to the ancestors and fallen king which helped them to drive away evil spirits from possessed bodies during mountain worship, they also served as items used to banish evils, release emotional worries, combat spiritual challenges, and generate spiritual powers that connects individual to the ancestors, gods and spiritual world among others. It is then concluded that effigies and symbols are significant in social and cultural lives of Idoma people, and there was no discordant in the philosophical conception of literate and illiterate Idoma persons on the use of effigies and symbols in the society. Thus, it was recommended that effigies and symbols should be viewed in the light of their functions and the contributions they have made to socio-cultural lives that were of values to Idoma people.

Introduction

Before 1890s, artefacts were a way of recording history in Africa, but to the Idoma society of central Nigeria, these were very sacred historical records of its people and the library of her time; the means by which knowledge itself was passed from generation to generation. Idoma oral history, mythology and documentary sources of information indicate that Idoma people migrated from Apa in the Jukun territory around 16th century (Armstrong, 1955; Magid, 1981 Erim, 1976 & Amali, 2000). Idoma people have occupied parts of central Nigeria, where they have a deep rooted culture, tradition and history. Idoma art and iconography have always played vital roles in offering historians, archaeologists, anthropologists and sociologists with ideas and concepts concerning what Idoma people held as central features in the cultural make up of their society. Before the advent of Western education in Central Nigeria, Idoma people were very aware of their natural surroundings, including some mountains that they regarded as being holy, that gave meaning and significance to the entire environment as both the living and the inanimate were represented by artefacts or symbols and effigies (Amali, 2000). At present, there are Idoma people who have gone through formal schools and have been educated in the various tiers of Western education system in Nigeria, and have therefore patterned their lives along western values and styles. These groups, are in this study, referred to as literate persons. The illiterate Idoma persons were those that never went to formal schools, and could neither read, nor write, and have patterned their lives along traditional values. Presumably, the presence of Western education in Idoma society would have affected the philosophical conceptions of literate and illiterate Idoma persons on effigies and symbols, especially at mountains for exorcisms which this study seeks to examine.

An effigy is a three-dimensional representation of a person or personified entity. In the field of archaeology, effigies are clay or stone artefacts that portray animals or people. Cultural effigies are believed to hold significant spiritual power for African indigenous people, and as testament to that power, humans started producing

clay and stone effigies (Rodning and David (2010). They further stated that some effigies reflect a realistic style, while others are created in a more ambiguous fashion. Effigies are important to study because they are categorized in a group of artefacts that are known to provide insight into the cultures that created them. Effigies could be of complete figures or partial appendages (Horne 2015). Many could be found at the Mountain tops in Idoma Society.

Studies have shown that effigy are figurines that were designed to stand alone, not attached to anything which consists of a head with an extremely long snout and a large elongated ear. Commonly, effigy figurines have been made in a crude fashion from un-tempered clay (Zelin 2010). Based on manufacturing techniques, there are two subtypes of effigy figurines. The first sub type was formed around twigs, reeds, or possibly bones, or had these materials attached to the figurines (Galloy, 2004), while the second subtype was made from lumps of clay, with no other materials involved. Majority of these "lump" figurines are zoomorphic, portraying both animal and bird creatures, however, the presence of possible anthropomorphic figurines have also been noted (Maher, 1990, Ozuk, 1987).

Effigy appendages which were made from clay and stone were manufactured to be part of something else, usually a vessel, or a pipe (Koldehoff and Galloy 2005). Majority of effigy appendages are grog tempered, meaning crushed fired pottery that is additionally added to unfired clay (Galloy, 2002). So, un-tempered clay could be related to effigy figurines, while tempered clay could be linked to effigy appendages. Amali (2000) related the idea that effigy appendages held more spiritual or ceremonial importance, since the manufacturers obviously put more time into making them. Most importantly, is the fact that those types of effigies that are believed to have spiritual powers are now used by both Christians and traditional worshipers at some designated mountains, which are presumably holy for some spiritual exercise, particularly exorcism (Driving away evil spirits). Thus, effigies are in various forms and have been a symbol of indigenous cultures in a number of different ways among the Idoma people of North Central Nigeria.

In this study, a symbol is a material object or a written sign used to represent something invisible by association or resemblance. Symbols are abstracted versions of ideas and an indirect means of communication (Ghartey, 2011). Among the Idoma people, the nature of a symbol depends on the attitudes and general outlook on the life of the clan that created it. Moyeart (2004) described symbol as something such as an idea, object, conventional or non-conventional that is used to represent something else. Symbols can neither be invented nor produced intentionally as they grow out of the individual but are accepted by the collective unconsciousness of the clan in which they appear. Just like living beings, symbols grow when the situation is ripe for them, and they die when the situation changes. This has been the case in the pre-literate Idoma society when there were several symbolised effigies in homes, with each serving a purpose for the people that created them. There have been changes in attitudes towards effigies and symbols with the advent of Christianity, Islam and Western education in Idomaland.

Turner (2010) and Ghartey (2011) asserted that the anthropological study of symbolic forms/processes and the functions of symbolism has generally thrived in the past decade. Tillich (1896) in Amali (2000) considered symbolism as an artistic and poetic movement or style using symbolic images and indirect suggestion to express mystical ideas, emotions, and the state of mind. Littlefield (1979) and Amali (2000) connected the symbols signifying effigies among the Idoma people to the ideas of ritual, religion and social structure to provide insightful looks into ways in which the indigenous cultures chose to represent themselves, their values and to interpret the world that surrounds them. Thus, cultural construction and development of Idoma indigenous peoples are understood through the study of effigies iconography and symbolism. Specific symbols can relate to mountain worship or larger ideas concerning Idoma cultures, such as certain animals like the leopards, or the bear, representing hunting prowess. Adams (2002) explains symbolism as the systematic use of symbols or pictorial conventions to express an allegorical meaning. Ghartey (2011) stated that people express their ideas or qualities in symbolic forms like

ceremonial swords, masks, objects of worship, the stool in the Akan society which serves as a symbolic link between the common people in the society and their heads (i.e. the chief or head of the village).

A number of studies have been conducted by archaeologists, historians, anthropologists and sociologists on effigies and symbols. Among them are Zelin (2010); Steponaitis and Dockery (2011); Koerper and Disautels-Wiley (2012); Horne (2015). These researchers have used effigies and, symbols to reveal the roles of certain individuals, who might have played direct roles in, either the modelling and or implementation of rituals, ceremonies and everyday life of prehistoric societal groups. The symbols represented by effigies can be directly connected to ideas of religion, ritual, and social construction. Gibson (2001) gave an example of Native American use of effigies by examining Owl effigies at Poverty Point, or pre-Columbian ceramic design studies in Peru, to give insightful expressions about their cultures, values and the world that surrounds them. Thus, the classification of the effigies and symbols existing in a given society can be exploited to generate ideas and philosophical concepts concerning its ceremonial complex, prehistoric mythology and its indigenous cultural belief system. For instance, among the Idoma people, the paramount ruler of the Idoma nation is the Agaaba-Idu (the Lion of lions) which was represented in a symbolised form. In Otukpo kingdom of Idomaland, the traditional ruler is Odu, the dagger that digs hard surface and wears a royal bead which signifies his authority. Also, Lancelot (2015) revealed how Edo-Benin of South-South Nigeria used effigies with encrypted messages in them (that is, symbols) not only to keep record of its prehistoric people, but also to connect with their ancestors.

Littlefield (1979) and Amali (2000) stated that in Idoma societies, there were effigies and symbols that bore social and religious values and significance. These symbolised effigies were usually found on some mountains (for worship and rituals), in private homes, public meeting places, and shrine sites, the royal palaces, and in some specially designed locations of cultural and historical importance to the Idoma people. Some of these effigies and symbols included statues, beads, carvings, mouldings, animal skins, bones and remains

of some animals, reptile and birds (e.g. elephant, crocodiles and crown-bird).The ceremonial complex of Idoma societies of Central Nigeria provides an analysis of symbolic and iconographic cultural effigies, through which the Idoma people offer and pay tributes to their fallen kings and calling out to ancestors (ancient gods) in daily life (Amali 2000). In Idomaland, for example, the sculpture of Anjenu is celebrated through the mediation of figures symbolised and preserved in shrines. The Anjenu was invoked by men who wanted their wives to become pregnant. Protruding conical breasts and navels are common features of Anjenu. The face is usually painted with white pigments, a stylistic characteristic often shared with Ibo people of Eastern Nigerian. Seated statues with one or several children are believed to incarnate fertility, a frequent theme in the society. Idoma people also make face and helmet masks. It is believed that the water spirit, Anjenu, lives in the rivers, and this is honoured during ceremonies involving mortuary masks with white faces, silted eyes, and teeth impregnated with kaolin (Littlefield, 1979; Amali, 2000).

There are Idoma specialists who produce various kinds of indigenous arts and crafts. These are handcrafts found in home and served as symbols of social and cultural values to the Idoma society. These include objects that were carved, woven, moulded, cast, and so on. However, the advent of Western education and Christianity in Idoma communities has caused a change in the conceptions and attitudes towards the cultural significance of artefacts, such as symbolised effigies among the Idoma people .According to Amali (2000), the acquisition of Western education had created ambivalence in the indigenous belief system, among the Idoma illiterate and literate persons, creating a divide in the philosophical conceptions of those that patterned their lives after Western values, and those who follow traditional or indigenous belief system. Therefore, this study was set out with the intention of examining the philosophical conceptions of literate and illiterate Idoma persons on the usefulness of effigies and symbols in Idoma societies of Central Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at examining Mountain worship and the philosophical conceptions of literate and illiterate Idoma persons of Central Nigeria, on the usefulness of effigies and symbols.

Research Question

What are the philosophical conceptions of literate and illiterate Idoma persons of Central Nigeria, on the usefulness of symbolised effigies on mountain worship**?**

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in Mountain worship and the philosophical conceptions of literate and illiterate Idoma persons of Central Nigeria, on the usefulness of symbolised effigies

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey method. The population for this study consisted of all Idoma people, who are literate and illiterate. A total number of two thousand seven hundred (2700) Idoma illiterate and literate persons (1350 illiterate and 1350 literate persons) were sampled across all the nine (9) Idoma Local Government Areas of Benue State, using multistage sampling technique i.e. cluster sampling technique at the 1st stage and simple random sampling technique at the 2nd stage. Researcher's questionnaire (with four-liker-scale responses) was used to extract data on the philosophical conceptions of literate and illiterate Idoma persons as regards the usefulness of symbolised effigies. Structural interview and observation technique were also used to give credence and support to the responses made to the questionnaire items, and to enrich the data gathered. This included visits to cultural sites, traditional religious rites, shrine houses at Mountain tops, as well as discussion with the elders by the researchers. Frequency and percentage were used to estimate the demographic data of the respondents and provide answer to the research question raised,

while independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis postulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analyses and Results

The data obtained from 2700 Idoma persons (1350 illiterate and 1350 literate persons) were analysed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Answering Research Question

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Philosophical Conceptions of Idoma Illiterate and Literate Persons of North Central Nigeria on the Usefulness of Effigies and Symbols

No	Items	Literate					Illiterate				
		Response Types				Total	Response Types				Total
		SA	A	D	SD	(%)	SA	A	D	SD	(%)
1	Effigies and symbols are important traditional religious items in mountain worship.	431 (32%)	550 (41%)	192 (14%)	172 (13%)	1350 (100%)	485 (36%)	557 (41%)	173 (13%)	135 (10%)	1350 (100%)
2	Effigies are items in mountain worship for paying tribute to the ancestors or fallen kings	401 (30%)	447 (33%)	254 (19%)	248 (18%)	1350 (100%)	451 (33%)	416 (31%)	252 (19%)	231 (17%)	1350 (100%)
3	Effigies help in Mountain worship to banish the bad and release emotional worries of the people.	387 (29%)	482 (36%)	265 (20%)	208 (15%)	1350 (100%)	412 (31%)	487 (36%)	277 (21%)	164 (12%)	1350 (100%)

4	Effigies and symbols are significant in combatting Socio-spiritual problems	366 (27%)	399 (30%)	298 (22%)	287 (21%)	1350 (100%)	453 (34%)	482 (36%)	263 (19%)	152 (11%)	1350 (100%)
5	Effigies in mountain worship aid in counselling oneself spiritually and psychologically.	405 (30%)	432 (32%)	218 (16%)	297 (22%)	1350 (100%)	449 (33%)	461 (34%)	201 (15%)	239 (18%)	1350 (100%)
6	Effigies and symbols are often made in honour of the dead and preserved at mountain tops	319 (24%)	385 (28%)	292 (22%)	354 (26%)	1350 (100%)	401 (30%)	447 (33%)	281 (21%)	221 (16%)	1350 (100%)
7	Effigies are used in mountain worship to expel excessive communal diseases or sickness	362 (27%)	376 (28%)	332 (25%)	276 (20%)	1350 (100%)	438 (32%)	484 (36%)	226 (17%)	202 (15%)	1350 (100%)
8	Effigies are used in mountain worship for calling spirits and boosting faith in mountain worship	312 (23%)	378 (28%)	308 (23%)	352 (26%)	1350 (100%)	447 (33%)	369 (27%)	278 (21%)	256 (19%)	1350 (100%)

9	Traditional sculptures are significant to cultural life in Idoma Societies	382 (28%)	402 (30%)	240 (18%)	326 (24%)	1350 (100%)	404 (30%)	396 (29%)	245 (18%)	305 (23%)	1350 (100%)
10	Effigies generate spiritual power that connects individuals to the ancestors/spiritual world	344 (25%)	389 (29%)	337 (25%)	280 (21%)	1350 (100%)	423 (31%)	496 (37%)	301 (22%)	130 (10%)	1350 (100%)

Table 1 revealed that in item 1, out of 1350 literate and 1350 illiterate persons, 981 (73%) and 1042 (77%) of them strongly agreed/agreed that effigies, symbols and Mountain worship were important traditional religious items, while 364 (27%) and 308 (23%) strongly disagreed/disagreed. In item 2, 848(63%) and 867(64%) of Idoma literate and illiterate persons, respectively, strongly agreed/agreed that effigies and symbols in mountain worship are items for paying tribute to the ancestors, or fallen kings, while 502(37%) and 283(36%) strongly disagreed/disagreed. This is analysed up to the very last item where 733 (54%) and 919(68%) of Idoma literate and illiterate persons, respectively, strongly agreed/agreed that effigies and symbols in mountain worship generated spiritual power that connects individual to the ancient ancestors/spiritual world, while 617 (46%) and 431 (32%) strongly disagreed/disagreed. Thus, all the items' statements (item 1 – 10) strongly agreed/agreed by a very significant number of Idoma literate and illiterate persons sampled in Idoma communities of Central North Nigeria. Therefore, majority of the literate and illiterate persons in Idoma communities regarded effigies and symbols in mountain worship as important traditional religious items for honouring the dead and paying tribute to the ancestors and fallen kings; as items used to banish the evil and release emotional worries; as items used to combat spiritual social and traditional problems; as items to generate spiritual power that connects individuals to the ancestors/spiritual world, among others.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4: t-test Statistics Showing the Difference in the Philosophical Conceptions of Literate and Illiterate Idoma Persons of North Central Nigeria on the Usefulness of Symbolised Effigies

Status	No	Mean	S. D.	Df	t-value	Sig	Remark
Literate	1350	169.20	16.83				
				2698	13.13	0.72	**NS**
Illiterate	1350	168.86	18.03				

*Insignificance at p>0.05

Table 2 shows that the t-value of13.13 is obtained with a p-value of 0.72 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.72 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the philosophical conceptions of literate and illiterate Idoma persons of North Central Nigeria, on the usefulness of effigies and symbols ($t_{\{2698\}} = 13.13$, $p>0.05$).

Discussion

Findings from this study revealed that a significant number of Idoma literate and illiterate persons sampled, strongly agreed/agreed with all the items statements on the usefulness of effigies and symbols during mountain worship in Idomaland of North Central Nigeria. Given the philosophical conceptions of majority of literate and illiterate Idoma persons, effigies and symbols are important traditional religious items. There are series of symbolic effigies in Idoma cultural sites and shrine houses at mountain tops. According to some elders (both literate and illiterate) interviewed in Idoma communities, these effigies, apart from being the significant objects in Idoma cultural life, are being used to serve different cultural purposes ranging from the political to the spiritual. Many others believe that these effigies are more powerful when they are put into proper use at the mountain top for spiritual cleansing and other exercise, particularly during exorcism. This is because at that lofty height, the spirits are released without any obstruction to fight and deliver the possessed person from the evil spirit holding them. This assertion supports Zelin (2010), who also stated that effigies are used in cultures around the world for different purposes which were best known to traditionalists and spiritualists. Effigies are items for paying tribute to the ancestors or fallen kings and honouring the dead. In Idoma communities, there are effigies of past kings. According to Amali (2000), these effigies were honoured during the Idoma festive period, as a means of remembrance of the ancestors. For pedagogy, they were used as instructional aids, as students visit cultural sites to

confirm stories of the past, and their roles in the makeup of Idoma societies.

Also, a very significant number of literate and illiterate Idoma persons were found to admit that effigies and symbols used during mountain worship help in combatting spiritual, social and psychological challenges of Idoma people. Using a communal effigy to banish excessive diseases, epidemics and sickness in Idomaland is very common. Ills that plague humanity such as draught, hunger, sickness, war, or death, and so on, can be embodied into an effigy and symbolically destroyed. As admitted by an interviewee, Opita "using effigies and symbols to release emotional worries, one could let go of past pain, guilt, sorrow, or anger that no longer serves one".

In addition, majority of Idoma literate and illiterate concurred that effigies are significant items used during mountain worship for generating spiritual power that connects individual to the ancestors/spiritual world. Effigies were items used to transform oneself. Steponaitis and Dockery (2011) asserted that effigies and symbols can be big or small, detailed or crude, and are used alongside other elements of an initiation ceremony, or serve as a complete rite on its own and acknowledging such occasions with a ceremony helps manifest a smooth and positive transition in one's life. Whether one is dedicating oneself to a new spiritual path, or reinventing oneself to begin a more satisfying career, effigies and symbols are made a striking addition to any initiation rite.

Lastly, results showed that when it comes to mountain worship, there was no statistical difference in the philosophical conceptions of Idoma literate and illiterate persons on the usefulness of effigies and symbols in Idoma communities of Central Nigeria.

Conclusion

Mountains, in Idomaland as elsewhere, are usually taken as symbols of immutability, which is the reason why those involved in mountain worship sees mountains as places that are physically closer to the world of the gods or God, owing to their closeness to the heavens, their domination of the landscape, and the difficulty with

which they are ascended. In fact, some Christian and traditional religions in Idomaland denote the dwelling places of the gods or God, either on or in the mountains.

Mountains have an unusual power to awaken a sense of the sacred entity in Idomaland. Their soaring summits, the clouds and thunder that swirl about their peaks, the life-giving waters that flow from their heights, these and other characteristics imbue them with an aura of mystery and sanctity. In that aura, people of diverse backgrounds, both traditional and modern, literates and illiterates in Idomaland experience a deeper reality that gives meaning and vitality to their lives.

Given, the findings obtained, it can be concluded that effigies and symbols are significant in mountain worship, social and cultural lives of literate and illiterate persons in Idoma communities of the North Central Nigeria. Also, there is no divide in the philosophical conceptions of Idoma people on the cultural usefulness of effigies and symbols regardless of their educational estate and religious inclinations.

Recommendations

With respect to the findings obtained, it is, thus, recommended that effigies and symbols should be viewed in the light of the contributions they have made in the cultural make up of Idoma society, and their usefulness to the lives and values of Idoma people in the realm of psychological, social, political, economic, religious, cultural and artistic domains. The negative perception of effigies and symbols (such as idols) by some religious adherents, particularly Christians and Muslims should take cognisance of the multiple values they serve and represent to other Idoma persons.

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Chapter 24

The Reality of Mountain Prayers in Nigeria: A Sociological Analysis among Some Worshipers in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Religion is an integral aspect of human society, this is because it provides answers to the perceived psychological and spiritual problems. Thus, mountain prayer is one of the religious activities for a specific purpose that requires positive answer to a pressing real world situation, condition, necessity and reality. The aim of this research was to examine the reality of mountain prayers among some worshipers in Ilorin, Kwara State of Nigeria through a sociological analysis. The study is anchored on symbolic interactionism and rational action theories. Interview was conducted among twenty (20) Christian and Muslim worshippers in Ilorin, Kwara State. These religious worshippers were selected through purposive sampling technique. The findings revealed that these worshippers converged at the mountains for personal, spiritual and non-spiritual gains. Based on the above, it was recommended that conducive atmosphere should be provided for mountain prayers towards solving myriads of individual and societal problems in Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria is a pluralistic society where religion has become a phenomenon. Indeed, religion is so important in the society as a form of social control because of people's adherence to religion, whether traditional, Christian or Islam (Ikporukpo, 2010), which are the recognized religions in Nigeria, though the last two are more pronounced. Christianity and Islam, especially have a great influence

on the daily lives of Nigerians, and play a significant role in the psychological and socio development of the worshippers.

Religion is an integral aspect of human society, this is because it provides answers to the perceived psychological and spiritual problems. Thus, mountain prayer is one of the religious activities for a specific purpose that requires positive answer to a pressing real world situation, condition, necessity and reality. Most Nigerians appear to be very interested and committed to religious activities for spiritual benefits. Nigerians take their religion very seriously that they still go outside their reserved sacred places for extra spiritual activities. According to McCain (1999), there seems to be so much church activities, campaigns, crusades, conferences, retreats, conventions, pilgrimages, vigils, picnics, night, evangelistic, without much corresponding spiritualities and moral growth. Also, Imosem (2012) posited that, it appears that many Nigerians are religious without being righteous.

The Muslims and the Christians are the dominant religious movement in contemporary Nigeria. The Muslims have the mosques for their spiritual activities, the Christians use the churches for sacred activities, and the traditional African worshipers which are not common though, also have their shrine for spiritual activities. Some members of these movements are often seeing in the neighbourhood mountaintops, organizing extraneous spiritual programmes outside their reversed sacred places. Some worshipers go there for days, some weeks and even month. They are seeing as individual or groups. Against this background, this paper examines the reality of mountain prayers in Nigeria through a sociological analysis among some worshipers in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

The expression of religion varies from one religion to another as a result of different beliefs and practices. All these put together compound the problem to achieving a single universally acceptable definition of religion. According to Nwahaghi (1998), a simple comprehensive definition of religion cannot be attained because of

the complex nature of religion. In the same vein, Metuh (1987) put it that, the study of religion attracts people with various interests as theologians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, economists, historians etc., each of them sees it from different perspective. However, in the opinion of Watkins and Watkins (1992), religion is an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, practices and worship that centre on one Supreme Being called God or the Deity. Furthermore, Kitause (2012), described religion as the conscious and sub-conscious response to the ultimate source of existence referred to as God in whichever name or language.

As a concept, religion has come to occupy a centre stage in both our consciousness and in academic discourses. According to Adeniyi (1993), religion is a body of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendent Being. While Bellah (1970) understood religion as a set of symbolic forms and actions that relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence. Adefarasin (2004) views religion as the recognition of all duties as divine commands, that religionist is earnestly devoted and attached to religion.

As an element of religious belief, prayer cannot be separated from the faith of man. There is no clear cut between prayer and life, contemplation and action, liturgical celebration and Christian living, because faith affects a special and important moment of man life. Faith is of its nature an activating influence and it contains the grace of God. In which ever form, prayer is at the centre of worship. Christian prayer includes thanksgiving, praise, confession, invocation, fasting and others. It follows the pattern of the prayer known as the Lord's Prayer given by Jesus Christ to his disciples (see Matthew 6: 9-13; Luke 11: 2-4). Prayer is understood as spiritual communion for the sake of requesting something from a deity. In its broadest sense, prayer is any ritual feature to bring one into closer relation to whatever man believes to be supreme. At the highest level, sacrifice is absorbed into prayer to facilitate the processes and total commitment from God.

Most prayers are brief, concise and straight to the point. Indeed, some prayers in the Bible are less than one minute long, even John 17 would take only three minutes or more. God also responds to

sincere prayer, intelligent, brief and truthful requests. This makes us to understand that God hears the prayer of every man directly or indirectly. At the beginning of the year, most churches encourage members to come and share moment with God, complain their worries, concerns and troubles to God at the mountain.

In Islam, there are also five pillars of faith, these pillars are very mandatory to the belief and practice of every Muslims, but some Muslims also engage in other voluntary spiritual activities like the mountain prayer depending largely on this Quranic verse and many others:

> And when Musa (Moses) came at the time and place appointed by Us, And his Lord (Allah) spoke to him: he said, O' my Lord, show me (yourself) that I may look at You. Allah said: You cannot see Me, but look at the mountain; if it stands still in its place, then you shall see Me. So when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He made it collapsed to the dust, and Musa (Moses) fell down unconscious. And when he recovered his senses, he said, glory be to You! I turned to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers (Qur'an 7: 143).

Theoretical Framework

Symbolic Interactionism Theory: - This is a sociological perspective which developed around the middle of 20th century and it continues to be relevant and influential to date. It is particularly important in micro sociology and social psychology. Symbolic interactionism is derived from the American philosophy of pragmatism and particularly from the work of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) by Herbert Blumer (1900-1987). Herbert Blumer (1900-1987) interpreted George Herbert Mead work, to coined the term and put forward an influential summary.

This perspective focuses on the ways that an individual or group interprets their religious experiences. It emphasizes that beliefs and practices are not sacred except people regard it sacred. Once they are regard as sacred, they take on special importance, attention, significance and meaning to their lives. Religious symbolism is the

use of acts, artwork and events to create myths expressing the reaching of the religion which goes with rituals. Ritual therefore, is a set of actions performed mainly for their symbols value that may be prescribed by the traditions of a given community on set of ideology or belief. And thus, belief is a strong supernatural power that control and influence destiny consciously or unconsciously.

Mountaintop prayer is a contemporary spiritual activity. And so, the worshippers can appreciate the homelessness and commit strictly to their aim and purpose of visit. In other words, see why they are strangers and pilgrims on the mountaintop. Pilgrimage in this context, refers to the situation in which the soul, wounded and groaning, weeps at the thought of a journey, the pilgrimage remains obscure until the goal has been reached. The soul is in the desert, tested in its faith, purified by God. However, this theory does not provide enough justification for mountain prayer, hence the necessity for the use of rational choice theory to complement the above.

Rational Choice Theory: -Gary Stanley Becker (1930-2014) was an American professor of economics and sociologist at the University of Chicago. Becker was one of the first economists to branch into what were traditionally considered topics belonging to sociology, including crime, racial discrimination, family organization, and drug addiction. He was known for arguing that many different types of human behaviour can be seen as rational and utility maximizing.

Becker (1976) came up with rational choice theory to explain the courses of human action, to him, people usually do what they believe is likely to have the best overall outcome for them. Thus, sociologists adopts this approach to the study of human behaviours from micro to macro levels of relationships of social systems and assumed how actors are primarily concerned with their own welfare, their preferences and self-interests. The theory assumes that actors are purposive in their decisions, that is, they intend their actions to produce beneficial results at the end. A basic postulate of rational choice is that, it is a meta theoretical assumption rather than an empirical generalization that Muslims and Christians who go to the mountaintop to pray act rationally. In acting rationally therefore, they

optimize, by maximizing spiritual benefits and minimizing spiritual and non- spiritual pains, by making choice from a set of alternatives. They can choose whether to go to mountaintop for prayer, stay back to sleep, watch movies or football matches. But some worshippers choose the decision and action of going to the mountaintop with peculiar concern and expectation according to their belief, preferences and convenience.

In a nut shell, rational choice is notable for the distinction between the truth of beliefs and their rationality, which refers to the grounds on which beliefs are held and act upon. Beliefs are coherent and compatible with experience that are said to be rational. Thus, it is irrational to hold beliefs which are known to be false, contradictory and incoherent. Religious beliefs in this context therefore, are expressive, symbolic, not informative and literal. Because believers choice is the mountaintop which they beliefs to facilitate and increase their spiritual benefits and thereby reduced their spiritual and other non-spiritual concerns.

Methodology and Study Area

Key informant interview (KII) was conducted among twenty (20) Christian and Muslim worshippers in Ilorin, Kwara State. These religious worshippers were selected through purposive sampling technique. Interview is an element of the qualitative method for data collection that affords interviewees the time and opportunity to share their opinions about the issue under investigation. The rationale for this is to acquire in-depth information about the topic under study (McNamara, 2009). In the course of interview, the researchers guaranteed the interviewees of their confidentiality. Also, notes were taken in the course of the interviews to ease the process of analysis and to devise alternative means in case of 'machine' malfunction. Furthermore, the researchers strictly adhered to all the characteristics of good interview identified by McNamara (2009) which include: (i) explaining the purpose of the interview; (ii) addressing terms of confidentiality; (iii) explaining the format of the interview; (iv) indicating the usual length of the interview; (v) asking them if they

have any questions before the interview commences; (vi) choosing a setting with little distraction; (vii) telling them how to get in touch afterwards - if they want to; (viii) making sure all instruments are in place so as not to rely on memory in order to recall their answers.

Ilorin is situated on the Awun River, with latitude of 8^0, $30^{'}$ North and longitude 4^0, $35^{'}$ East.[3] It shares boundaries with both Asa, Ifelodun and Moro Local Government Areas within the same Kwara State. It has thickly wooden Savannah vegetation, with locust bean trees, share butter trees and bamboo trees as the commonest trees. The rainfall is usually heavy between June and October, but normally, the annual rainfall begins around April or early May. The hottest period in Ilorin is normally January to March while the months of November to January is hamattan period.

Data Presentation

This part of the study focuses on the presentation of responses collected from the interviewees from different mountains within Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Informant 1. The practice of praying on mountains has its origin in the Bible, and offers many spiritual benefits for those who understand the importance of prayer. Praying on mountains helps a person to focus and committed to God, unlike what obtains when there is a crowd (Male - Christian – 37years).

Informant 2. If you want serenity or calmness, if you want a place that is very quiet, you can go to any mountain to pray (Male - Muslim – 28years).

Informant 3. What matters most is the heart from which you pray. If one prays to God anywhere with a clean heart and with strong faith, the prayer will be answered (Male- Muslim – 51years).

Informant 4. I had come to pray for success in my JAMB and NECO examinations and to gain admission into the university this year (Male - Christian–17years).

Informant 5. I am here to find some sort of peace within, because I don't like the evil thoughts that are threatening to take over

me whenever I'm at home alone. I'm here to pray for miracle soon and I believe seriously that my testimony is around the corner (Female-Christian – 24years).

Informant 6. I come here once every week with my parents and other relations for prayer (Female - Muslim - 12years).

Informant 7. Coming to mountaintop helps to free my mind of immediate worries and I go home feeling better. I feel like my burdens have literarily been lifted. I have received several miracles by coming to this mountain and I also brought friends here too who have also testified to God's goodness (Female - Christian – 22years).

Informant 8. Mountaintop is a special place for holiness considering various references from the Holy Qur'an (Male - Muslim – 32years).

Informant 9. The place accommodates all kinds of people, the rich, poor, educated, uneducated, tall and short. Students, celebrities, bankers, academics come here. The mountain is open to everyone who is interested (Female - Muslim – 43years).

Informant 10. The Lord gives us freedom to pray anywhere, whether on the mountain, inside your house, while bathing, eating, on your bed. I mean anywhere at all (Male - Christian – 46years).

Informant 11. The spirit of God directs our cleric to the mountain to become a special place for prayer (Female – Christian– 19years).

Informant 12. After prayers and fasting, the place is also sanctified with prayers, so that people who seek Allah in such places can have their prayers answered. After such, that place has become a special place (Male - Muslim - 26years).

Informant 13. The mountain is the temple of God and for a person to descend the mountain you must be free of sins because you have climbed a place that is higher than things of the flesh and earthly thoughts. And if you believe, you will receive God's blessings and abundance. Just like when God told Moses in the story of the burning bush, the mountain is holy (Male – Christian – 61years).

Informant 14. I had expected to be promoted at my work place, but unfortunately, I lost my job instead (Male – Muslim – 33years).

Informant 15. I played the drums during the worship sessions on the mountaintop (Male – Christian – 23years).

Informant 16. Your spiritual status will change if you climbed the mountain to pray. The Bible says in Psalm 24: 3-4 thus: 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully (Male – Christian – 35 years).

Informant 17. When the mountain was discovered, prayers were said on the mountain and the place was purified and secured for special prayer (Female – Muslim – 28years).

Informant 18. I pray on mountain occasionally to isolate myself from the people and materialist world (Female – Muslim 42 years).

Informant 19. Prayer on the mountain does not only provide a good environment for spiritual communication, but also helped to boost religious unity among the various denominations (Female – Christian – 53years).

Informant 20. Praying on the mountain facilitates my prayers and I hook on to friend from different spheres of life (Male–Muslim 24years).

Conclusion

Prayer is a way that God gets to show His glory. A single prayer can change everything and bring healing, restoration, joy, fertility, avert death and judgment. When prayer is answered God work is seen, and God is glorified. Mountain prayer is for a specific purpose that requires positive answer to a pressing real world situation, condition, necessity and reality. From this study, it was found that most people perceive mountain prayer to facilitate solution to problems.

Nigerian people are known for their religiosity. Some Muslims and Christians who converge at the mountains in Ilorin and beyond, convey for reasons and concerns that are peculiar to an individual or group. In other words, people who attend the mountain for prayers, go there for personal spiritual and non-spiritual gains. Religion as an

institution therefore, has serious influence and power over the people. Thus, religion could facilitate the growth and development of other spheres and institutions significantly. It is therefore recommended that, all movements should come together to address the menace of religious intolerance, fanaticism, insecurity, insensitivity and self-interest for the interest of sustainable national development. Besides, there is need to provide conducive atmosphere for mountain prayers towards solving myriads of psychological and spiritual problems of Nigerians.

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Chapter 25

Impact of *Ori-Oke* Prayer on Cultural Change in Nigeria: An Assessment

Akor Sunday Joseph

Abstract

The main objective of this theoretical paper titled impact of Ori-Oke prayer on cultural change in Nigeria is to discuss and also to assess the impact of Ori-Oke prayer on the culture and the people of Nigeria. The paper makes use of Emile Durkheim structural functionalism perspective of religion to achieve its objective. The paper is divided into seven different section which includes, introduction, theoretical orientation, historical evolution of Ori-Oke prayer, cultural practices in Nigeria, impact of Ori-Oke prayer on cultural change in Nigeria, an assessment and conclusion. The paper pointed out that Ori-Oke prayer is a radical shift from the usual pattern of prayer which is normally done in worship centre mainly in a well-constructed building located within the vicinity of human dwellers'. The prayer also pointed out that Ori-Oke prayer is a way of taken its adherent to the biblical pattern of prayer and worship which is aimed at spiritual empowerment of the practitioners. The paper further posits that Ori-Oke prayer is the way of escaping from the polluted and distractive environment to isolated place just like the pioneer of Christianity and in the olden days where e they escaped from the oppressive rulers and paganism that were anti-Christianity. The paper maintained that Ori-Oke prayer has contributed to the cultural change in Nigeria particularly in making sure that cultural practice that is not in line with the tenets of the bible are rejected and discouraged. The paper further maintained that despite the fact that Ori-Oke prayer has become so popular among new generations of Christians in Nigeria and has contributed to several positives changes in Nigeria, an assessment of Ori-Oke prayer contributed to causing division, discriminatory among the Christians instead of unity that is emphasized in the bible. The paper therefore conclude that inspire of the short coming associated with Ori-Oke prayer, the overall benefits to the people of Nigeria and world in general out weight its short comings or disadvantages and should therefore be encouraged and sustained. The paper recommend among others that the Christian association of Nigeria should come out with

general guide-lines that will monitor and guide against un-Christian-like conducts on Ori-Oke prayer.

Introduction

Sociology as a discipline is concern with the scientific study of human society and all the different institutions in human society. Therefore, sociology focuses on political institution, educational institution, economic institution, family institution and religion institution among others (Ohitte, 1987). Furthermore, sociology as a discipline aim at addressing social problems and disorderliness in human society. The main aim of the discipline is to restore order, peace and tranquillity in human society. The founding fathers of sociology wrote extensively on the various social institutions in society. One of the institutions that attracted scholars from sociology and other discipline is religion institution. The contribution of the religion institution towards restoring order and tranquillity in human society cannot be over emphasized. Sociologists like Emilee Durkheim (1968), Max Weber (1964) and Karl Marx (1965) among other notable sociologists wrote extensive on sociology of religion. These scholars took particular notice on the role religion plays in shaping the behaviour of human being, a cultural and social change in human society among others. For example, Emile Durkheim apply his general theory of functionalism to the study of religion when he wrote his book "The Elementary forms of religion" (Durkheim, 1954). He noted how religion influence the behaviour and general conducts of human being, generally.

Karl Marx on the other hand noted how religion influence every aspect of human life such that decision and conclusion on any issue cannot be carried out without the influence of religion. He noted that religion control the lives, behaviour and culture of the people the same way alcohol consumption influence the alcoholic in terms of behaviour and conducts. Karl Marx therefore conclude on his sociology of religion that religion is the opinion of the people.

Marx Weber (1964) on his own part wrote on protestant ethics and the spirit capitalism". He explained that religion influence is strong on human beings such that the economic and other vital decision cannot be carried out without religion influence. Max Weber noted that people who are Protestants by their religion sects are likely to be influenced by their religion belief in investing in business than the catholic religion sect.

In modern days Christianity there are two sect of Christians that believes that prayer should be done on the mountains and those who believe that prayer should be done in church hall and the comfort of living room. There are different ethnic groups in Nigeria with different languages. The western part of Nigeria speaks Yoruba. The word Ori-Oke is a Yoruba language translated literal as mountain". Therefore Ori-Oke prayer means prayer that is done on the mountain". This paper is an attempt to discuss the impacts of Ori-Oke prayer on cultural change in Nigeria. The paper will be discussed under the following heading:

a. Introduction
b. Theoretical orientation
c. Historical evolution of Ori-Oke prayer
d. Some cultural practices in Nigeria
e. Impact of Ori-Oke on cultural changes in Nigeria
f. An assessment
g. Conclusion and recommendation

Theoretical Perspective

Sociologists generally use the theoretical frame work to explain social phenomenon in all human society. One of the main theories used by earliest sociology to achieve this objective is a functionalism theory. Notable sociologist that used functionalism theory as a basis of understanding of human societies includes Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer Max Weber, and Robert Merton among others. Emile Durkheim relied on functionalism theory to explain the nature

of social order the relationship between the various parts (structures) and their contribution to the stability of the society.

According to Coser (1977), Emile Durkheim was in guest of what would today be described as functional equivalents for religion in fundamentally a religious age. To Emile Durkheim, religion had been the cement of society- the means by which men had been led to turn from the everybody concerns in which they were variously enmeshed to common devotion to scared things, by this wrenching men from the utilitarian preoccupations of daily life, religion had been the anti-individualize force par excellence, inspiring communal devotion to ethical ends that transcended individual purposes.

Emile Durkheim (1954) conceived religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things that is to say, things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unites in one single moral community called church, all those who adhere to them" Emile Durkheim further posited in his theory of religion that the deities which men worship together are only projections of the power of society. To him, religion is eminently social. It occurs in a social context and more importantly, when men celebrate sacred things, they unwittingly celebrate the power of the society. To Durkheim religion has four major functions in every human society. These functions include:

(a) Disciplinary
(b) Cohesive
(c) Vitalizing
(d) Euphoric social forces

To Durkheim, religion rituals prepare men for social life by imposing self-discipline and certain measure of asceticism. Religion ceremonies bring people together and thus serve to retain their common bonds and to reinforce social solidity. He further maintained that, religion observance maintains and revitalize the social heritage of the group and helps to transit its enduring values to future generations and finally religion has euphonic functions that it serves to counteract feelings of frustration and loss of faith.

Concluding, his theory of the religion Emile Durkheim assert that, religion as a social institution serves to give meaning to man's existential predicaments by trying the individual sphere of transcendent values which is ultimately rooted in his society.

Linking this theory to the main trust of the paper, one can assert that Ori-Oke prayer prepare the individual adherent to be disciplined and law abiding citizen of the society, further more to prepare the individual to be integrated in their society and community in particular. Furthermore, it helps to take away feeling of pains and frustration from the individual with the belief that their challenges has been taken away by a supreme being who are more powerful than them, the above explanations and theoretical link with the topic of this paper justify the relevant of Emile Durkheim theory of this study. The relevant question that should ask at this junction is how does Ori-Oke prayer emerged? This question will lead to this next section of this paper which is historical evolution of Ori-Oke prayer.

Historical Evolution of Ori-Oke Prayer

Before discussing the evolution of Ori-Oke prayer (mountain prayer) it is very important to define the concept of Ori-Oke (mountain) from the biblical perspective and the literal meaning of mountain from dictionary or English language perspective. According to Hornby (1984) "mountain is a mass of very high land going up to a peak: for example Everest is the highest mountain in the world.

On the other hand, Ogboji (2004) defined mountain from the biblical or bible perspective as, "mountain can be defined as a very high land projecting upward and higher than hill". Mountain is secluded, lonely and quite place of sacrifice, worship and for prayers. He further pointed out that mountain from the biblical point of view is not just only a mass of very high land but also a place of worship that is devoid of distraction, dirty and pollution that is often associated with dwellings place in human society. To him mountain from biblical view is often a place separated from residential area. For purpose of this study, mountain is conceived as very high mass of

land, a place of worship devoid of any form of distraction and pollution where religion adherents go to pray to their God. The evolution of Ori-Oke prayer can be categorized into two main categories, before birth of Christ (B.C) and secondly during the life-time and after the death of Christ. This category is based on the contents of the bible that is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament accounts. The Old Testament represent the period before the birth of Christ while the New Testament represent the life-time period of Christ and after his death.

The first biblical account of Ori-Oke prayer could be traced to the bible (i.e.) when God commanded Abraham to take his son Isaac to mountain for sacrifice as form of worship to him. According to James (1996). God commanded Abraham, "to take now thy son Isaac, whom thou loves' and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him their burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis22 Vs 2).

This particular incident of Abraham taken his son to a mountain in order to sacrifice him to God inform of worship trigger the beginning of evolution of Ori-Oke prayer among Christian across the globe. According to Kolawole (1998) Christians all over the world considered Abraham as "fathers of faith" and as such, started to irritate him by going to mountain when they have need for special prayer, sacrifice and worship to God.

Furthermore, Ori-Oke mountain prayer can be traced chronological to when God had encounter with Moses whom was a shepherd then. According to King James Version of the bible, "now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Median and led the flock to backside of the desert and came to the mountain of God even to Hoverb…and when God saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him and said draw not nigh hither put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place thou stands' is a holy place" (Exodus 3vs 1-4).

To Okechuku (2005), from the point when Moses was called on mountain, Horeb and directed by God to pull off his shoe because of sacredness of the mountain Horeb Christians sees mountain as a sacred place of worship and a meeting point with God. Okechuku

(2005) further asserted that right from the period when Moses was given the Ten Commandments on mount Morial was given definite instruction on how Christians should conduct and behave themselves. Christians all over the world who have special needs particular during period of uncertainty often go to mountain to seek further guidance and clarification from God in prayer.

The New Testament account of the origin of Ori-Oke prayer can be traceable to the activities of Christians particularly the Disciples of Christ during Christ evangelical period on earth. According to Mathew(cited in James)", and seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain and when he was set, his disciples came to him and he opened his mouth, and taught them. Furthermore Jesus wanting to teach his disciples on how to pray which took them to the mountain top. According to Mark gospel of chapter 9vs2" and after six days Jesus takes' with him Peter and James as well as John and lead them up into high mountain apart by themselves and he was transfigured before them. It was while on the same mountain that he told the disciples who were tired and could no longer have energy to pray again that the "men always ought to pray and not be tired".

According to Ademola (2009), Jesus Christ exemplary life by taken the disciple to mountain often for prayer marked the origin of mountain prayer in Nigeria particularly in the western part of Nigeria.

The paper will now beam its search light on some cultural practices in Nigeria for the purpose of drawing out some linkages between Ori-Oke prayer and it cultural and its effect on social changes.

Some Cultural Practice in Nigeria

From sociological perspective, culture is defined as way of life of certain group of people residing in the same territory and shares so many things in common such as language among others. Culture can be divided into two i.e. material and non-material culture including and (Ottite 1987).Based on the above definition therefore, Sociologist assert there is no best or worst culture all over the world; this is because culture is simply a way of life of people.

Nigeria as a nation is made up of different ethnic groups and cultures. As a result, there is no common culture that binds the whole ethnic groups in Nigeria together. A cultural practice that is acceptable in one community or ethnic group is forbidden in another. In a workshop organized by Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) tagged Christians and cultural practices in Nigeria" held in Shendam in plateau state in year 2007. Ebere (200) opined that majority of ethnic groups in Nigeria permit wives inheritance i.e. a cultural practice whereby wives of deceased are taken in as wives by the deceased relations. To him, such cultural practice is anti-Christianity and should be discouraged.

In his paper titled, 'Ibo culture and Christianity" Ibeku (2001) assert the cultural practice where by wives(s) of deceased are force to take on oath by drinking the water used in bathing a dead body is not only un hygienic and dangerous to health of the women but it is anti-Christianity, to him Christian forbids Oath taken.

According to Dogara (1995), Nigeria has so many ethnic group and so many religion beliefs, there is no state religion because so many people are often guided by the culture of where they reside and also by individual religion belief. To him, many Nigeria culture make provision for multiple marriage. To him, the cultural practice of multiple marriages varies from one ethic groups to other.

According to Jimoh (1999), some prominent cultural practices that cut across the nation includes annual masquerade dance, new yam festival, traditional marriage rites, female circumcision among others. To him majority of the cultural practices in Nigeria negate the tenets of the two dominant religions in Nigeria which include the Christianity and Islam.

Some cultural practices in Nigeria include presentation of different kinds of alcoholic drinks and local cigarette known as "snuff". Okoro (2010) supported the position when he asserted that among the Idoma and five speaking ethnics groups of Benue state, No traditional marriage is said to be successful and completed if alcoholic drinks and "snuff" is not presented as culture demanded. No doubt, some of the above cultural practices and others that have not been mentioned here will definitely have negative impact on

Christianity in Nigeria. This is because Jesus pointed it out that "any culture or tradition that does not neglect the word of God should be allowed. In other words the culture that neglect or contradict the word should be rejected.

Impact of Ori-Oke Prayer on Cultural Change in Nigeria

Ori-Oke prayer or mountain prayer is a place where Christians go to pray. The purpose is to get closer to God and further be empowered to do what they ordinary cannot do as a result the people go to mountain to pray for strength to resist temptation. In other word to obtain the grace to obey the word of God among other request. Christians in Nigeria are part and parcel of Nigeria society and its culture. Christian practices their religion belief in the same cultural environment with non-Christians. No doubt, some approve cultural practice in Nigeria will definitely affect Christian practice negatively. The relevant question at this junction how Ori-Oke prayer affects cultural change in Nigeria.

It is a cultural practices in Benue states and all over the Ibo speaking ethnic groups in Nigeria among others to take alcoholic drinks from you would be in law. This practice is against the tenets of Christian teaching. As a result of Ori-Oke prayer, many Christian are now bold to reject such practices that the bible doctrine does not approve. Most Christians are now beginning to say that what they don't eat or drink, they can't give or serve others. The fact that many parents will not want their children to remain unmarried, reluctantly allow non-alcoholic drinks to be served. In this process the cultural practice of serving drinks is been eroded and make optional leading to cultural change in Nigeria.

As a result of Ori-Oke prayer coupled with Christian seminar and teaching at Ori-Oke (mountain).Many Christians are frowning at cultural practice of a wife inheritance. Many are standing by the bible practice of one wife and one husband. As a result cultural practice of my wife inheritance is no longer in vogue rather widowhood and care for widows is now the order of the day. Julius (2013), emphasized that the cultural practice of drinking the water used to bath dead body

in Nigeria is being rejected by Christians as a result of spiritual empowerment gotten from Ori- Oke prayer. To him and the others oath taking in any form is against the tenets and teaching of Christianity. To him most Christians widow are now preferred to be thrown out of the family house to taking oath , Oath taking as a culture practice is now replaced with the word of God that says, "vengeances is mine says the lord".

The traditional mourning of the dead, where wearing black clothes is a cultural practice is now replaced with wearing of white clothes. This is because Christian feel that anything that is black represents devil and white represent God. As a result of Ori- Oke prayer, many Christians now challenge mourning with black clothes. This is what can never be allowed due to cultural practice, wearing of white is now the order of the day for mourner leading to cultural change. As a result of Cultural change most Nigeria Christians particularly female folks no longer subject themselves to female circumcision. It is cultural belief that that female who are not Circumcised are promiscuous. But Ori- Oke prayer makes Christians to abstain from pre- marital sex among other vices. As a result of Ori- Oke prayer majority of cultural practice that is regarded as anti-Christianity is gradually been wipe away and given room to what many Sociologists now refer to as re-colonization of Nigeria culture. But others who are liberal prefer to call it social change.

An Assessment

No doubt, Ori- Oke prayer has led to so many positive changes in terms of behaviour among Christian, but there are negative vices associated with it. For example, Ori- Oke prayer has led to breaking so many homes and marriages, in other word, Ori- Oke prayer tears many family apart. Some married women who go to pray on the mountain overnight often give room for suspicious by their spouses. Not many husband believe their wife goes to pray on the mountain instead they have gone to sleep with other men.

In addition to the above, Ori- Oke that is supposed to be a place purity and worship is gradually been turned to a love nest by secret

lovers. Since on the mountain, there is general no control by any individual people can choose to stay in any private corners where the others mountain users cannot see them and do what they want.

Furthermore, since nobody in particular has control over the mountain, both idol worshippers and Christian worshippers go there for worship and sacrifice. This is against the original idea of been holy place. In addition to the above Ori-Oke prayer often lead to division among Christians in Nigeria. The Christians that go to Ori- Oke to pray often look down at those that do not go to pray on the mountain as extremists.

Also, it can also be observed that Christians that go to mountain to pray are gradually withdraw from church attendance. This alone is against the word of God that encourage togetherness in time prayer and not separation.

In addition, Ori -Oke prayer sometimes constitute nuisance to those who live or reside close to the mountain. Prayer with loud voice and beating of musical instrument give sleepless night to the residents (around the mountain) In some cases children who are supposed to be in school reading often abandon their studies all in the name of going to Ori- Oke for prayer of success instead of working hard to succeed.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper started by focusing on inter-play between sociology as discipline and society, religion and culture of the people in Nigeria. The paper pointed out that the religion indeed is unifying forces that keep the society in order of peace and tranquillity. The paper also discovered that Ori-Oke prayer has so many advantages and disadvantages, but since the advantages overweighed the disadvantages, the Ori-Oke prayer should be encourage and sustained.

The paper therefore makes the following recommendations:

Firstly Christians Association of Nigeria should come out with general guideline that will monitor many unchristian like practice in Ori-Oke. Secondly, when development is coming closer to mountain

in terms of residential building, other place (mountain) should be sought to avoid conflict with nearby residents. Thirdly, it is advised that where necessary husband and wife should attend Ori-Oke together particular in the night to avoid suspicious among couple that often lead break down of family unity where the practice of both idol worshippers and Christians worshipping on the same m mountain should be discouraged.

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Chapter 26

Mountain Worship and Quest for Miracles: A Study of Some Selected Miracle Mountain Prayer Ministries in Igboland

Orji Boniface Ifeanyi & Odeh Lemuel Ekedegwa

Abstract

Nigerian churches had witnessed the emergence of new religious activities in forms of worship sessions and services that focuses their activities in the various mountains they believe to be holy. The quest of going to seek for miracles in the mountains is relatively new on the igbo religious landscape which is swiftly expanding at breath-taking speed and is now a force to be reckoned with in Igboland with greater chances of outliving the 21st century in view of the fact that it is widely and readily being accepted by all classes of people for its claims of physical and spiritual empowerment These new patterns i.e. quest for miracles tend to confuse authentic worship with magical and superstitious signals. This paper tries to dig into the origination of mountain worship into some Igbo churches/ministries. The essay explores the history of Christian Church in Igboland and the recent involvement of people in mountain worship all in the name of miracles and healings. The methodology adopted for the study is phenomenological design. The study uncovered that there are so many factors in favour of the expansion and consolidation of mountain miracle worship in Igboland. The paper affirmed the point that mountain miracle worship in its entirety is not bad but what is needed is a change in the right focus of miracle message. The paper believes and concludes that the teachings are at times so toxic and brainwashing to the extent that people no longer seek adequate medical attention, rather goes to this mountains for miraculous healings at the detriment of their lives.

Introduction

Worship refers to forms of the liturgy, adoration, ritualism and praise. It is conceived of as a religious act carried out for the most part in a

designated place with a sacred significance. In Africa however, more than a celebration, *Worship* touches on the collective self-identity. This does not posit linguistic relativism as an absolute principle of cultural disparity. But the very interpretation of such vital cultural elements can be of great importance for dialogue in mission. Indeed cultural values, like different languages, constitute universal qualities lived out differently. (Bradshaw, 2000; 22)

Miracles, healing and casting of demons are common among the Pentecostal believers in Nigeria especially among the leaders of Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria, and the case is not different in Igboland. The practice of healing, casting out of demons, deliverance from 'the power of darkness', and sometimes, from poverty by Pentecostal preachers have become an integral part of Christianity in Igboland and there is now a new paradigm shift for these miracles and healings from the conventional church centres to some special and dedicated mountains in Igboland.

As sacred expressions of some deeper reality, mountains have become associated with the deepest and highest values and aspirations of cultures and traditions throughout the world. The remote Himalayan peak of Mount Kailas directs the minds of millions of Hindus and Buddhists toward the utmost attainments of their spiritual traditions. (Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen: 2004; 21) Mount Sinai occupies a special place in the Bible as the imposing site where Moses received the Ten Commandments, the basis of law and ethics in Western civilization. (Uzukwu: 1997; 17) In some parts of Igboland, there exists various mountains such as Ugwu di Nso (Holy Mount), Prayer City Mountain in New Heaven, Eva Valley Camp, Ohum Monastery Mountain, all in Enugu state, Ebube Muo Nso Mountain Prayer ground in Ebonyi State, etc. where people go for miracle and prayers sessions especially when they feel that there is desperate situation which calls for desperate measure. (Achunike: 2009; 42)

Before the advent of Christianity in Igboland, there exist some mountains that were set aside as gods/ancestral abodes, which Christianity came and destroyed, turning some of the mountains to prayer centres. While some new prayer ministries in Igboland are

nestled in big mountains. This is because Igbo people traditionally believe humans are closer to gods when they are in high mountains/nature than in man-made environment, some mountains are viewed also as places from whence it is possible to communicate directly with, or meet with the gods or their messengers, or as a place to have a transcendental experience. (Kalu: 2008; 112) However, the issue of mountain worship is a recent phenomenon in Igboland. The new generation churches in Igboland especially the prayer ministries are now incorporating mountain as a vital part of their religious worship since they have equally realized or believe that the higher the mountain that you go to pray, the closer you are to God.

History of Christian Church in Igboland

Christianity in Nigeria dates back to the 16th century when the Portuguese introduced Latin Christianity in Benin and Warri. (Ngozi: 2014; 19) Looking at Christianity from that early beginning to the present time, many stages of development had taken place resulting to the planting and growth of churches. The history of the church in Eastern Nigeria can be divided into various periods: One, the period of introducing Latin Christianity in the 15th and 16th centuries; Two, the period of Denominationalism and missionary activities in the 19th century from 1842 onward; Three, the period of evolution of Independent churches, Four, the period of Indigenous African Churches; and Five, the period of the birth of charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. The period from 1980 to 2010 is remarkable as it witnessed the spread, growth and spread of churches in Nigeria, and the birth of different prayer ministries which after a very short while metamorphosed in a church, some of them chose to go to the mountains or are stationed in the mountain for one spiritual exercise or the other.

Historically, Pentecostalism is an internally motivated socio-religious phenomenon in Africa[5]. This was between 1910s and 1920s when an Anglican deacon launches an indigenous prophetic movement that later becomes the Christ Army Church (CAC). Following an influenza epidemic in 1918, revivals flare within the

mission churches and the CAC leading to the formation of prayer groups and churches to cushion the effect of the influenza. (Kalu: 2008; 117) During the 1930s and 1940s, a revival led by Joseph Babalola broke loose resulting to the establishment of Christ Apostolic Church and the arrival into Nigeria of Classical Pentecostal churches including the Assemblies of God Church and Foursquare Gospel Church among others. (Pew Research Centre: 2015; 16)

The 1950s saw the founding of Celestial Church of Christ, Cherubim & Seraphim society, Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and other churches. This epoch witnessed rapid expansion of Christianity to Northern Nigeria. 1960s-1970s register a wave of revival among Charismatics ministries in tertiary institutions in Nigeria which eventually metamorphosed into Pentecostal churches like Benson Idahosa's Church of God Mission, Benin and Williams Kumuyi's Deeper Life Bible Church, Lagos. (Ojo: 2006; 212) From 1980s up to the present time there has been an explosion of Pentecostal denominations in Igboland where they are in constant struggle for dominance with the first generation churches i.e Orthodox churches.

These days some 'Orthodox' healing centres and Prayer Houses are developing alongside the prophet-healing centres of the New Religious Movements (NRM). Some of these healing centres, are even run by Catholic priests and devout lay persons and are located in mountains and serene environments. Here accommodation is provided for patients. For out-patients and other visitors, consultations are held by the "Man of God" on specific days. It is presumed that fees are not charged for services rendered, but those who are healed or whose problems are solved are expected to donate generously in support and maintenance of the centre or the healing ministry. At some of these healing centres run by Catholic Priests, healing masses are celebrated regularly and clients whose prayers have been answered gives 'testimonies' to such events.

These healing centres are referred to as Orthodox because Catholics may visit them without any hindrance. These centres are thought to be safer for Catholics. Some of the well-known orthodox healing centres include the following: The famous Catholic prayer

ministry of the Holy Spirit at Elele, Nigeria, run by Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Edeh, C.S.Sp. St. Anthony's Healing ministry, run by Rev. Fr. C. Usungurua, Afaha Obong, diocese of Ikot Ekpene Nigeria; Jesus is Love and Power Catholic healing ministry, directed by Father S.E.U. Osigweh at St. Augustine's Catholic Church Ikorodu, Archdiocese of Lagos, Nigeria; The Catholic Prayer ministry of the Healing Power of God, directed by Father Osilama Obozuwa, Auchi, diocese of Benin, Nigeria End of Time Overcomers Revivalist ministries, run by Rev. Father Murumba Jean Oguogho, Diocese of Benin*;* Ugwu Nso Healing ministry and pastoral centre, Eke, diocese of Enugu run by Rev. Fr. Ugonna Igboaja. (Achunike: 2009; 45)

The Spreading of Mountain Miracle Centres in Igboland

The emergence of new churches and other new Christian Movements in Nigeria is unprecedented. At present Nigeria is being spotlighted as the country with the highest number of churches in Africa. This is more so in the major cities of the southern part of the country particularly in Igboland. Hence churches, prayer houses and deliverance ministries are said to be a major industry in the geopolitical extraction of the country. Churches exist in family houses, uncompleted buildings, warehouses, and in any available space. (Ngozi: 2014; 20) In the same vein Jibromah (Jibromah: 2012; 75) opined that the popularity and spread of Pentecostalism in Nigeria hinged on some factors among these are the high rate of political position seekers, insecurity, diseases, demonic attacks, corruption and violence.

The operators or owners of these churches or ministry in Igboland during the late 90's started moving to isolated areas mainly mountain that the regard to be holy for the worship, where they hold prayer sessions and those seeking for solutions for the above-mentioned problems go to the mountains to consult them for their numerous problems. Mountain worshipers emphasize "spiritual warfare" and power to battle demonic influences which has a special meaning in a society where occult, ritual, crimes, killing and kidnapping had become the other of the day along with gang

violence. Hence, this brand of Christianity offers many solutions from a "superior God who can deal with demons and witches and by various supernatural beings". Most of those that patronize the mountain worship centres prefer to go there because it is held in a secret place and shield their identities from the general public. They attend their various churches on Sundays and secretly attend the mountains prayer centres on other days.

Buttressing this point further, Dada (Dada: 2004; 35) asserted that the prosperity gospel perhaps was offered as a panacea for the harsh socio-economic condition, quoting Okey and Ndibe, by stating that:

> In their promise of deliverance from mundane problems, spiritual sects touch a nerve in the contemporary Nigeria mood. A society stretched on the rack of ignorance, disease and poverty becomes easily seduced by the brandishments of functional utilitarian religion…They expect to be shielded from witchcraft, from hunger, from sickness…etc.

The exponents of mountain prayer centres in Igboland claim to have received spiritual powers and experiences. They go ahead to exercise the spiritual powers without recourse to any authority. In other words, the use of the Holy Spirit under different guise in today's Igboland takes place without anybody's discernment and approved of such claims. The desire to attain and remain in power has actually spurred many to engage in magic. Miracle done with powers of Satan has reduced the reputation of many churches today. Gone are those days when churches command the respect in the society as a residual custodian of moral values.

Mountain Worship and Miracle Rush in Igboland

The miracle rush and mountain worship is said to becoming an accepted practice of modern living in Igboland. It is noted to be a cluster of four themes "Faith, health, wealth and victory. In its basic form, faith, a spiritual power is released through positive words and

belief can be measured by wealth and health which allows believers to aspire to total victory on earth" (Sinitiere: 2015; 16) As emphasized by Udu, since the late 1990s, there seems to be an increasing number of people that are turning eagerly toward mountain worship for miracles that soothes the soul, and the prosperity gospel has mastered the tone, vocabulary and approach to do just that. Below are some reasons for the rush to mountains for miracles in Igboland:

Poverty: Poverty and deprivation is on high increase in Nigeria and other parts of Igboland. As far as poverty remains rooted in Igboland the rush to mountains for miracles is likely not going to dwindle and lose its flavour because of its appealing ideology to the poor. The deplorable state of Nigerian economy and the likely tendency to patronize the gospel of success is justified by Phiri & Maxwell (Phiri, I. & Maxwell: 2015; 15) when they document that "A religion of hope gleans brightly against the bleak backdrop of African poverty. Where poverty holds sway, the probability is high that people tend to quickly adopt the rush to mountains for miracles than missionary Christianity. As can be deduced, poverty is a contributory factor for the thriving of the rush to mountains for miracles in Igboland today and this may probably go on unabated for many more years to come. It is probably for the above reason that many Africans especially Nigerians would want to escape poverty by all means through the embracement of mountain worship for miracles.

Sacred: Many people revere mountains as high places. Some Igbo Mountains, in particular, has assumed the status of a sacred mountain in both ancient and modern Igboland. Its summit symbolizes for some people the highest goal one can strive to attain, whether one's pursuit is material or spiritual. For instance, Ugwu di Nso is a place set aside by both Catholics and non-Catholic for prayers and other spiritual exercise. Little wonder then, many religious groups and prayer ministries will declare some days of prayer ranging from seven days to forty days to be done at Ugwu di Nso and other Mountain prayer grounds. They will travel from a very far distance to these places and spend days there in prayer and worship believing that the height and sacredness of the mountain make it possible for them to be closer to God.

Centre of the Cosmos: An extremely widespread importance of the mountain is centre of the cosmos, the world, or a local region. Although some scholars have gone so far as to assert that every sacred peak is an *axis mundi*. With this caveat, it is true that a large number of mountains in Igboland, such as Ugwu di Nso, Oke Maria, Eva Valley etc. are patterned on the mythical Mount, which stands as a cosmic axis around which the universe is organized in Igbo cosmology. Certain mountain peaks in Igboland are singled out by particular cultures and traditions as places of sanctity. These mountains (the ones traditionally known as "sacred mountains") have well established networks of myths, beliefs, and religious practices such as pilgrimage, meditation, and sacrifice.

Power: Many sacred mountains are revered as places of power, both natural and supernatural. The Igbo people believe that there is efficacy in prayer and of create importance is the place the prayer was offered. They believe their prayers contribute to the successes they have achieved. This is why they pray. Christopher Okafor observes this in his statement. He said "Ekpere nwere ire" meaning that prayer has efficacy. He also said that without prayer and sacrifices, medicine cannot be effective. (Okafor: 2008; 10)

The Igbo religions partly recognize a group of being popularly known as divinities. These beings have been given various names by various writers such as 'gods', 'demigods', 'nature spirits', divinities, and the like. Mbiti explains that the term "covers personification of God's activities and manifestations, the so-called 'nature spirits', deified heroes, and mythological figures" (Mbiti: 1975; 65)

Divinities have been grouped into two major groups namely: the Principal Divinities and Minor Divinities. Principal divinities are regarded as part of the original order of things. Njoku sees these as being "coeval with the coming into being of the cosmos". (Njoku: 2002; 56) They include such divinities as *Sango* or *Amadioha* – thunder divinities for Yoruba and Igbo with its abode in the mountain; *Ani* or *Ala*– earth divinity among the Igbo, etc. The power of many sacred mountains derives from the presence of deities-in, on, or as the mountain itself.

Temple or Place of Worship: Many traditions revere sacred peaks as temples or places of worship. Likewise in Igboland, mountains may be revered frequently because they contain sacred sites and objects such as temples, monasteries e.g. Ohum Monastery, hermitages, stones, springs, and groves, or are associated with the activities of important holy persons, such as Mount Nike and Ugwu di Nso. These mountains are now used as temples or places of religious worship.

Sense of wonder: In Igboland, mountains commonly awaken in individuals a sense of wonder and awe that sets them apart as places imbued with evocative beauty and meaning. Many tourists, and church member today go to Ugwu di Nso, Eva valley etc. for aesthetic and spiritual inspiration and renewal, often regarding them as expressions of important values enshrined in works of literature and art.

Inspiration, Renewal, and Transformation: In Igboland, mountains are regarded as such ideal places for meditation and spiritual transformation that the new generation churches expression for embarking on the practice of religion means literally "to enter the mountains". North American Plains Indians, such as the Lakota and the Crow, seek out high places for vision quests that give them spiritual power and determine the course of their lives. Many in the modern world go to mountains such as the Alps and the Sierra Nevada for artistic inspiration and spiritual renewal. Igbos had borrowed such practice and it fast developing into the consciousness of miracle seeking Igbo Christians.

Conclusion

Mountains had been a unique site of cultural worship confluence of the Christian religious and Igbo artistic traditions. Igbo associations with mountain worship may not always accurately reflect actual circumstances, as they were often the result of contemporary interest's projected back to an earlier time. It was established that Igbos believes that Worship enables them to receive grace to cooperate with God in the eternal project of universal salvation.

These days, some Igbo Christians see mountain worship as a channel to display their deep experience of the mystery revealed in the Christian story.

Hence, a healthy expression of the incarnate human in Igbo Christian worship should be the prerogative of enculturation. It is also true that theological excellence is not a sign of sublime faith but this article has tried to harmonize the Igbo sense of mountain *Worship* with the Christian theology of the universal vocation to holiness. It is an *attitude* and a *language of life* which bond humanity with God. The African progenitors understood this bond well and it gave birth to their customs. Life was a prolonged rhythm of worship, a sacred liturgy, integrating the whole person into the process of an eternal command of love, justice and fairness.

The realization that we in the "power filled, Spirit anointed, apostolic, prophetic, miracle working church" have had or pursued miracle and spiritual power at the mountains without repentance negates the purposes of Jesus' miracles and power encounters in the synoptic gospels. At this stage of nation building when the products of Nigerian society manifest abysmally strange characters ranging from crimes to moral deficiency and conflicts in all spheres of our life as a nation, Nigerian religious leaders should employ the use of these miracles and power encounters to bring people to honest and sincere repentance. There is a total collapse of our value system in Nigeria today.

Salvation messages that touch people's life and cause them to repent are rare commodities in our churches today. Miracles done with questionable powers have reduced the reputation of many churches. Gone were those days when churches command the respect in the society as a residual custodian of moral virtues. However, real heaven backed, salvation-laded, heart touching miracles, still happen.

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Chapter 27

Joseph Ayo Babalola: The Pioneer of *Ori-Oke* Spirituality in Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C.) in Yorubaland, South-western, Nigeria

Rotimi Williams Omotoye

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to examine the pioneering work of the Late Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola, a member of the Faith Tabernacle that metamorphosised to the Christ Apostolic Church in Yorubaland in particular and later spread to other parts of Nigeria and Diaspora. The methodology adopted was historical because the primary and secondary tools of research were based on oral interviews and available written documents of the Church respectively. The Christ Apostolic Church became a formidable and a recognized Church in Yorubaland because of the evangelistic campaigns of Apostle Ayo Babalola in Yorubaland. As a result of his spirituality, he visited some mountains which were dedicated for prayers and became sacred and being visited till date. The focus of this paper was on Ori-oke Isegun and Ori-oke Ayo in Efon Alaye, Ekiti State. These were founded by Ayodele Babalola before his demise and being sustained till date. However, the original focus has been changed because some of them have been commercialized by some leadership of the church. It is also interesting to note that every Christ Apostolic Church in Yorubaland has a pre-fix of Oke to the name of a Church. In conclusion, Ori Oke has become a phenomenon in Christ Apostolic Church in Yorubaland. In fact, some other African Independent Churches and Pentecostal Churches copied the idea of visiting Ori Oke for prayers from Christ Apostolic Church. However, it should be noted that prayers of Christians could be answered anywhere the name of Jesus Christ is mentioned with absolute faith in God.

Introduction

A cursory examination of the history of *Ori-Oke*, mountain prayer experience and spirituality in Yorubaland, South western, Nigeria is ordinarily and normally traced to the initiative of late Pastor Joseph Ayo Babalola who was a prominent member and one of the leaders of Christ Apostolic Church in Yorubaland in particular and Nigeria in general. However, it must be stated clearly that Christians in the mainline Churches, such as, Church Missionary Society (CMS) later known as Anglican, and Roman Catholic Church, had lived on mountains from the second half of the 19th century. For example, Christian missionaries in Epe, Lagos state settled at *Oke Oyinbo*, David and Anna Hinderer lived at *Oke Padi* in Ibadan; there was also *Oke-Are* in Ibadan. In Osogbo and Ado Ekiti the Christian missionaries also lived on mountains. The *Ori-Oke* for the white Christian missionaries was a settlement and residence because of its serenity and quietness. On the other hand, *Ori-Oke* for the *Aladura* or African Independent Churches (AIC) was a place of prayer as from the second decade of the 20th century. It is also necessary to note that there was a paradigm shift regarding *Ori-Oke* as a Prayer Mountain by the Mission churches in the last four decades. The Mainline Churches too have started having some mountains dedicated and designated as sacred places as *Ori-Oke* for prayers. The Catholic Church has *Oke Maria* in Otan-Ayegbaju, Osun state and *Oke Maria* in Oro, Kwara State. The Diocese of Osun North (Anglican Communion) in Otan-Ayegbaju too has a dedicated *Ori-Oke* mountain for prayer.

Joseph Ayo Babalola

Many scholars have written on the Life and Times of Joseph Ayo Babalola of Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C.). Ishola and Ayegboyin (2013) opined that "Joseph Ayo Babalola was born at Odo- Owa, Ilofa, a small town near Ilorin in Kwara State in 1904". His parents were members of Saint Peters Anglican Church, Odo- Owa. His father was Pa David Lawani Rotimi and Mrs Martha Talabi Rotimi.

Idowu (2013), opined that "he first began his education in Aworiland where his brother and uncle, Mr. Rotimi Moses had worked as a Catechist of the Anglican Church. He later moved to Methodist school Ago Ajaye at Ebute metta in 1921 and later moved to Osogbo with his brother who was transferred to the town". There he attended M.C.S. school to standard five before he finally left to learn a trade as a blacksmith. Since he could not garner enough money to buy the necessary equipment, he started working with the Public Works Department when the Trunk A road from Ilesa to Akure was been constructed. He served under a European Supervisor; Mr. Ferguson in 1928.It was in the process that he was called by God at a point in the present Ikeji Arakeji, where Joseph Ayo Babalola University was established by the C.A.C. His religious experience was a dramatic calling to the service of God. His steam roller was out of use without any identified mechanical fault. It was eventually realized that it was a call of God upon his life. Even though, he was initially reluctant like the prophets in the Old Testament, such as Jonah, he eventually left his professional job and answered the call of God. He went back to Odo-Owa his home town to evangelize. Unfortunately, his new religious experience could not be permitted in the Anglican Church. Persecution arose and he was invited to join the new religious movement known as the Faith Tabernacle which started in 1918 at Saint Saviours Anglican Church, Ijebu Ode. He met Pastor F.T. Odubanjo, a leader of the Faith Tabernacle and was rebaptised by him. Idowu (2013) quoted Turner's comment on Ayo Babalola as "the central and the most famous figure in the whole Aladura Movement". Well, the author is entitled to his opinion; however, we recognized Ayo Babalola as one of the leaders of the Church who contributed to its spread and growth through revivals and *Ori-Oke* which he started and left as a legacy till date in C.A.C.

The epoch-making and unforgettable 1930 revival organized by the Faith Tabernacle and attended by Ayo Babalola was a masterpiece in the history of the movement because of the miracles recorded and its aftermath. The revival took place at Oke –Ooye in July, 1930 at Ilesa. His credible performance and fervent prayer in the name of *Olorun Alaye* attracted the traditional King of Efon Alaye. The latter

invited Ayo Babalola to settle in his domain as an Apostle. He was an itinerant Pastor, however, he made Efon Alaye as his permanent abode of living. Our focus in this paper was the consecration and dedication of some sacred sites as *Ori-Oke* mountain prayers by Apostle Ayo Babalola.

Ori Oke as spiritual centres in Efon Alaye, Ekiti state:

Efon Alaye is a community surrounded by hills like the major communities in Ekiti state. The people speak a similar dialect to that of Ijesa people in Osun state. It is an agrarian community with farm products, such as cocoa, plantain, rice, cassava, maize and yam. The town is surrounded by the Yoruba Hills and makes it to be convenient and important as religious space for mountain prayers for Ayo Babalola. The traditional people believed in Olodumare like other parts of Yoruba people. Idowu (1962) opined that "The keynote of their life is their religion. In all things, they are religious. Religion forms the foundation and the all governing principle of life for them". The divinities are venerated and seen as intermediaries between man and the Supreme Being. The concept of God was highly regarded and in place before the introduction of Christianity to Efon Alaye in particular or Ekitiland in general. Omotoye (2002) observed that "No European Missionary came directly to preach Christianity in Ekitiland before the end of 19th century. The Ekiti who served as slaves or labourers in Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, and Ijebu were the first to embrace Christianity and from 1893-1900, they became a major agency for the spread of Christianity in Ekitiland". Christianity was introduced to Efon Alaye by Daniel Onileowo also known as Akigbe Maru in 1897. In other words, Christianity was introduced to Ekitiland by the Church Missionary Society and other Mainline Churches before the missionary activities of the African Independent Churches (AIC) and Pentecostal Churches.

The 1930 Great revival at Oke-oye, Ilesa was a watershed a paradigm shift in the history and growth of Christianity in Efon Alaye in particular and Ekitiland in general. Some members of the Tailor's Association witnessed the 1930 revival in Ilesa and they passionately

appealed to the then Alaye of Efon, Oba Bamilosin Aladejare Agunsoye 1 to invite the "man of God" to Efon Alaye. The traditional ruler was excited when he learnt that Pastor Ayo Babalola was praying in the name of *Oluwa Olorun Alaye*. A delegation led by Timothy Adeyemi Alowolodu was sent to encourage and invite Ayodele Babalola to Efon Alaye. The latter arrived the community on 29th September, 1930.

The members of the community gave the visitor a warm reception and initial accommodation was provided for him in the palace by the traditional ruler. The Oba embraced Christianity and was baptized as Solomon. A revival group commenced preaching the Christian gospel and incidentally the Oke-Oye revival group relocated to Efon Alaye in 1932. Many traditional worshippers were converted and submitted charms and other traditional elements to the Prophet. An expanse of land was given to the revival group in the town which was formerly seen as "evil forest".

Apostle Ayo Babalola an indigene of Odo- Owa in Kwara State, spent most of his missionary activities in Efon Alaye, a town in Ekiti state, Nigeria. He consecrated some hills which were later inherited by the members of Christ Apostolic Church. In Yorubaland, mountains are part of natural landscape and interpreted religiously because of the belief that those mountains were infused with and inhabited by spirits. The members of the Church, Christians from other denominations and non-Christians troop there for prayers because of the spiritual power seen in the prayers of Ayo Babalola. This is because they are places where according to the adherents, some manifestation of the divine or supernatural power bursts forth. Eliade referred to such places as "hierophany". Some of the mountains were consecrated by Ayo Babalola and being visited till date. In this paper, we are focusing on: Oke Isegun and Oke Ayo Prayer Mountain. The two mountains are found in Efon-Alaye.

These mountains are seen as religious places where God can be met because of the consecration of such places by Ayo Babalola. These mountains are owned by the Christ Apostolic Church. Adherents are fulfilled spiritually and the socio-economic impact of such places is being felt by the communities where the mountains are

located. However, a closer examination of the practices in such places indicated that the issues of commercialization of the mountains are gradually becoming the order of the day.

Ori-Oke Prayer Mountain in Efon Alaye

The *Ori-Oke* sacred sites are seen as the abode of God where God can be met for an answer to prayers. It has Biblical historical background. Mountains are believed to have special spiritual qualities that set them apart from ordinary places. A good example was Mount Sinai where Moses, a leader of the Israelites received the Ten Commandments. Jesus Christ on many occasions visited mountains to pray. The following Biblical references are relevant to this paper, 1 King 18: 20-42, Psalm 68: 6, 2 Samuel 15: 32, Matthew 17; 1-13. In these cited passages references are made to Moses, Elijah and Jesus. In Yoruba tradition, many mountains are seen as sacred and important. For instance, Oke Ibadan in Ibadan, Shao Hill in Kwara State, Iragbiji mountain in Osun State, Olumo in Abeokuta, Olosunta in Ikere Ekiti, and Orosun in Idanre.

The Yoruba people appreciated the phenomena and religious milieu associated with such hills and mountains before the introduction of Christianity to Yorubaland. So, by the time Ayodele Babalola consecrated the mountains in Efon Alaye, it was not new to the people. The new dimension was embraced as a way of meeting God in a new way. This is a demonstration of the importance of mountains in Christianity. It is believed that it used to be a serene environment where people can pray without un-necessary attractions.

It is necessary to mention that the mountains established by Ayodele Babalola are not meant exclusively for the members of C.A.C only. It is interdenominational and ecumenical in nature because worshippers from other denominations are appreciated and welcomed. In fact, some people from other religions are found attending programmes on the mountains in Efon Alaye.

Initially, Ayodele Babalola was in charge of the mountains but when he became the General Evangelist of C.A.C., he could not

combine the supervision of the mountains with his demanding assignment. A pastor is officially in charge of each of Oke Isegun and Oke Ayo Prayer Mountain at Efon Alaye.

Apostle Ayo Babalola *Oke Isegun* Prayer Mountain, Efon Alaye

According to Adeyemi (2015), "Babalola Prayer Mountain Oke Isegun, also known as *Orioke Agbara* (Power Mountain) is located at Efon Alaye, in Efon Alaye Local Government area of Ekiti state. The mountain according to information gathered from the pastor in charge (Baba Orioke) is one of the most frequently visited by Babalola when he was living in Efon Alaye during his life time". After the demise of Ayo Babalola the mountain is being visited by many worshippers from far and near. It is believed that any prayer said with faith would be answered by God. A visit to the mountain indicated that people from Lagos, Ibadan, Osogbo, Ikare, Ilesa, and nearby towns and villages used to visit the site. In fact a register provided by *Baba Ori-Oke* indicated that worshippers do come from Ghana, America and London to pray on the mountain. Almost everybody visiting the mountain for prayer would come with a bottle of water to be consecrated by *Baba Orioke*. Babalola during his life time was known and associated with water consecrated for healing. At the 1930 revival in Oke-Oye Ilesa, he consecrated river Ooye for healing of the worshippers. In fact, that was one of the accusations levied against him by the Colonial Administration that he was using unhygienic water to heal people. There is a song in commemorating this:

Babalola olomiiye re o, omiiye
Babalola the owner of sanctified water, sanctified water

It is observed that till date in any of C.A.C. church, people are found going to the church with a bottle of water. It is believed that after sanctification any disease or ailment would vanish and divine healing would take place.

The mountain was established in 1931 by Pastor Ayo Babalola. He used to spend many days and weeks alone on the mountain before his demise. Other Pastors would join him for prayers and fasting on the mountain. On other occasions, the members of the Church and non-members in need of his prayer would meet him for prayers and miracles on the mountain.

The mountain is also known as a place where spiritual strength is renewed by God. It is significant in the ministry of Ayo Babalola because it was the first mountain to be consecrated by him through a directive given to him by God. There is a tree on the site where Babalola and worshippers used to hang their cloths and Bibles whenever it was raining. A story was told that at a particular occasion, it rained heavily and to the amazement of everybody, it had no effect on the Bibles and clothing of the worshippers in attendance. This act intensified the faith of the people in coming to the place and it was regarded as a sacred place. This story is often told to increase the faith of the worshippers visiting the place for prayers.

The mountain is under the authority of C.A.C. Oke –Isegun, Efon Alaye. It is being maintained and controlled by leaders of the Church. In fact there is a committee in place that usually visits and gives instructions on who should be posted or transferred from the mountain as a Pastor. Presently, Pastor Matthew Babalola is the official Pastor in charge and being assisted by other four unofficial Pastors. There is no doubt that the assignments on the mountain were more than the capacity of an individual especially on prayer days. Many C.A.C. pastors in training from C.A.C. Theological Training school at Ile Ife and Babajide training school from Ilesa were met on two occasions that the researcher visited the mountain on research. The essence of their visit was to pray for more strength and spiritual empowerment from God. Many of them used to pray in the name of Apostle Ayo Babalola.

Religious activities on the mountain occupy the seven days of the week. Worshippers are seen coming and going out of the site. The normal programme of worship starts on Sunday with a Bible Study at 9.00 am. The next programme is Sunday service at 10.00am -12.00 noon. Pastors from C.A.C. congregate to pray for more power on

Monday. There is a congregational prayer from 9.00-12.00 noon on Monday. On Tuesday and Thursday the visitors pray on their own for whatever they want from God and it is termed "Hour of Liberty". The worshippers may pray individually, may come together as a group and may appoint a leader to lead as a group. Friday prayer used to witness more people because of the type of prayer they pray. It is titled *Ogungbogunmi* (War swallowed war). Worshippers are more at this programme because it is at week-end when people are freer to leave their place of work; the title of the programme is also attractive and encouraging to worshippers. It is an occasion to pray against enemies, pray against sicknesses, stagnation, unproductivity, poverty, lack of good job. In African countries in general, it is believed that "there is no smoke without fire." Every problem is ascribed to an enemy and a force that is against the destiny of a person. Therefore a need for prayer to have a break through; through prayer and fasting. There are also monthly and quarterly prayers, especially for worshippers from far places. The monthly prayers hold on first to the third day of a new month. Annual prayer programme holds in the last week of January and it is titled *Gboyaminu* (take away my hardship). There is also another annual programme known as "Annual Prayer Congress". The annual revivals are more interdenominational because worshippers from different denominations and even non-Christians are found amongst the congregation. Different programmes and events are held, so as to be attractive to people from other denominations. It is well publicized on radio and television, so as to attract people to the programme.

It is also observed that the site has become a tourist attraction for students in Secondary school in Efon Alaye. Some students and their teachers were met and visitors and researchers from different institutions were equally met on the mountain. They were attracted to visit the first mountain consecrated by Apostle Ayo Babalola.

A register of attendance is available for a visitor to sign. This is to ascertain the personalities visiting and records for posterity. Some names featured many times on the register and the destinations of some of them indicated, Lagos, Ibadan, Osogbo, Ilesa etc. as earlier indicated.

There are houses built on the mountain for accommodation of the visitors that would stay for some days. These were built by some worshippers whose prayers have been answered in the past. The necessary facilities are being provided on daily basis by the worshippers. Cooking utensils, fans, electricity generators, tables and chairs etc. are donated regularly as requested by the Pastor in charge. The worshippers were met sweeping and keeping the environment tidy when we visited. The women in particular have made it a point of duty to take care of the environment because in Yorubaland, women are expected to sweep and keep the home tidy.

Christ Apostolic Church *Oke-Ayo* Prayer Mountain, Efon Alaye

The second Prayer Mountain established by Pastor Ayodele Babalola in Efon Alaye is known as C.A.C. Oke –Ayo. It is located at Oke –Are area of the town. Religious activities on the mountain are throughout the week. It was consecrated in 1932 by Ayo Babalola through the ministration of the Holy Spirit. The location was a dreaded forest before its consecration by Ayo Babalola, in fact, it was known as *Oke Aremabo* (Mountain of no return). It was a thick and abandoned forest because of the belief that any ordinary human being that visited the forest would not come home again! It was a large expanse of land which the church acquired through Ayo Babalola. The mountain has become a place of worship and tourist centre in the community. There is a sacred designated point which was believed to be the point where Ayo Babalola stopped his movement in the forest when he was directed by God to acquire the land. Pastor Elijah Adebayo is presently in charge of the mountain. His monthly salary is being paid by the C.A.C. authority and he is responsible for the day to day maintenance of the site.

The programmes of the mountain are similar to that of *Oke Ayo* earlier described in the paper. Sunday service is held between 7.30am-10am. Night vigils are held on Wednesday and Friday between 9.00pm to 12midnight. There is also another General night vigil on the last Friday of the month between 10pm-4.00am. The Pastors are

at liberty to introduce some other programmes that would attract more people to the mountains.

The Features of *Oke Isegun* and *Oke Ayo* Mountains, Efon Alaye

An examination of the features of *Oke Isegun* and *Oke Ayo* indicated that they were established by Ayo Babalola in 1931 and 1932 respectively. They are being managed and controlled by C.A.C. authority in Efon Alaye. The authority of the Church determines who is to head each of the mountains at a particular time. The two mountains are different in the areas of leadership and control from other mountains that are owned by some individuals in the community. The name of Apostle Ayo Babalola is always mentioned when a prayer is being led by the leaders of the two mountains.

Prayer is a major feature on the mountains. It is believed that with God all things are possible (Luke 1: 37). Every challenge of life is brought by the worshippers to the mountain and there are testimonies being shared by members or visitors at the site.

Fasting is encouraged by the leaders of the two *Ori-Oke*. Collective and individual fasting is permitted on the mountains. The essence of it is to request for some important things from God, such as wealth, children, job, husband or wife, promotion, etc.

A feature that is very obvious is the act of dancing by the members of the congregation. Melodious music goes along with dancing in the two mountains. The two phenomena are ingredients that make the service lively and biblical. David the second King under the monarchy in Israel demonstrated active dancing in the Bible when the ark of God was taken to Jerusalem.

C.A.C. Hymn book is taken into consideration during Sunday service, while lyrics and choruses are more sang during mid-week programmes. Songs are important to invoke the spirit of God and to encourage worshippers to rely on God.

The worshippers are encouraged to make vows that would be fulfilled when the result is finally received from God. Testimonies are given considerable time, so as to encourage other worshippers.

The use of sanctified water is a common feature on the two mountains. One is not surprised because the founder of the two mountains made adequate use of water in healing people.

However, it is observed that women are not permitted to play prominent role in leadership position in the two *Ori-Oke* founded by Ayo Babalola. The reasons adduced by our informants were cultural in nature. Women who are menstruating are restricted from moving too close to the areas regarded as sacred sites on both mountains.

The C.A.C. as a denomination is used to the use of hand bell during services. Its function is to alert the members when to attend services and to maintain law and order during services. In most cases the Pastors on the two mountains would hold the bells when choruses are being sung in the two churches.

It is true that the visitors are contributing to the economy of Efon Alaye. Some visitors who are well placed in the society do go to the hotels in the town to sleep and food vendors are making some gains. However, the exercise is being abused because of commercialization of religion. Fear at times is being created in the mind of the people because of the vision and prophecy given to the people.

Conclusion

The two *Ori Oke* in Efon Alaye namely: *Oke-Isegun* and *Oke Ayo* are recognized as mountains dedicated and consecrated by Ayo Babalola. They are being maintained by C.A.C. authority in Efon Alaye. The two sites have become tourist centres for worshippers from different towns and cities in Nigeria and beyond. The features in the two mountains are similar, such as prayer, fasting, testimonies, healings are observed. However, women are not given prominent positions in the administration of the two mountains because of Yoruba cultural life of male dominance. There is no doubt that the mountain is meeting the spiritual rejuvenation of the worshippers and their expectations from God. On a final note, one may ask: Is prayer only answered on a mountain? The interaction of Jesus Christ and the Samaritan woman in the Gospel of Saint John 4: 23 "and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit

and in truth". This is an indication that *Ori Oke* may not be exclusive to prayer only.

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Chapter 28

African Spirituality and the Presence of God's Power on Ori-Oke among the Yoruba of Nigeria

Meleki, Adeniyi Oluwole

Abstract

The existence of a massive body of writing specifically on African religion, and the institutionalization of this field in academic has tremendously helped the existence of African spirituality (or religion) developed into at least a globally recognised social fact. The Yoruba word 'Aladura' literally translated as "Owners of Prayer" or "The Prayer People", refers to various independent churches of West African origin characterised by their belief in prayer, divine healing, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The belief in the possibility of deliverance from evil forces reflects a perception of the continual presence of God's power, and the need to pray, to prophesy and to heal assumes the possibility of immediate divine intervention. The Aladura Churches which began the indigenous Churches, by indigenous persons, and run under indigenous leadership, are champions of this course. The pivot of the Pentecostal churches world over is Prayer and the members are encouraged to commit every situation of life in the hand of God through it. Emotions and feelings are very important elements in prayer and they determine the depth, the sincerity and the worth of the prayer. Such prayer can only be spontaneous, long and at times accompanied with fasting; and they are often regarded more effective when said on a mountain top (ori-oke). Members therefore throng these sacred places for effective powerful prayers. Psalms in the bible are read, water or oil are blessed and sanctified for healing and other reasons. But what makes a mountain top (ori oke) a place of prayer? What biblical reference supports such practice? What takes place on Prayer Mountains? These are the focus of this paper that employs historical and analytical approaches in its findings.

Introduction

Among the callings of the Prophet and professed founder of the Christ Apostolic Church, late Ayodele Babalola is evangelism and soul winning. Thus whenever he went out to plant any church, he would look for a Prayer Mountain where he would pray for the power of God on that mountain to consume the spiritual powers that were affecting the community where he went to or where he is going next. He established several Prayer Mountains where he went with his followers to fast and pray in other to seek the face of God before going for revivals. Even many years after his demise, none of his cohorts in the ministry whom God calls that does not visit one or all of these mountains.

Aladura is a religious movement among the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, embracing some of the independent prophet-healing churches of West Africa. The movement has several hundred of thousand adherents that began among the younger elite in the mainline Christian community. They felt dissatisfied with Western religious forms and lack of spiritual power and were influenced by literature from the divine-healing Faith Tabernacle Church of Philadelphia in the U.S.A. in the 1918, a certain world influenza epidemic precipitated the formation of a prayer group of Anglican laymen at the Our Saviour's Church, Italowajoda in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State Nigeria. The major emphasise of the group was divine healing, prayer protection, and a puritanical moral code. And by 1922 divergences from Anglican practice forced the separation of a group that became known as the Faith Tabernacle, with several small congregations.

The main expansion occurred when a prophet-healer, Joseph Babalola (1906–59), became the centre of a mass divine-healing movement in 1930. Yoruba religion was rejected, and Pentecostal features that had been suppressed under U.S. influence were restored. Opposition from traditional rulers, government, and mission churches led the movement to request help from the Pentecostal Apostolic Church in Britain. Missionaries arrived in 1932, and the Aladura movement spread and consolidated as the

Apostolic Church. As expected of any new phenomenon, teething problems arose over the missionaries' use of Western medicines - clearly contrary to doctrines of divine healing - their exclusion of polygamists, and their assertion of full control over the movement. Between 1938-41 Christ Apostolic Church was formed by leaders which included Joseph Ayodele Babalola and Isaac B. Akinyele (who later became a knight). By the 1960s the church could boast of about 100,000 members with its own schools and had spread to Ghana.

African Spirituality

African spirituality simply acknowledges that beliefs and practices touch on and inform every facet of human life, and therefore African religion cannot be separated from the everyday or mundane (Olupona: 2016). For starters, the word "religion" is problematic for many Africans, as it suggests that it is separate from the other aspects of African culture, society or environment. For many Africans, religion is all encompassing as it can never be separated from all these phenomena. It is a way of life, and it can never be separated from the public sphere. Religion informs everything in traditional African society, including political art, marriage, health, diet, dress, economics, and death. This is not to say that African spirituality represents a form of theocracy or religious totalitarianism. African spirituality is truly holistic. The Yoruba do have a concept of a Supreme Being called *Olorun* or *Olodumare*, and this Creator God of the universe empowered the various *orisa* (deities) to create the earth and carry out all its related functions, including receiving the prayers and supplications of the Yoruba people (Idowu: 57-75). These prayers most times are offered on the mountain tops called ori-oke where it is believed the gods reside. This idea of visiting the *ori-oke* for effective prayers was captured and imbibed by the African Christians majorly found among the Aladura churches.

Preference for Sacred Place

In order to aid spiritual exercises the *Aladura* developed preference for the use of what they have termed as *ile mimo* or *ori oke* (sacred places) which they use for the purposes of prayer or as a sort of spiritual retreat. The general belief of the people is that such prayers if/when offered in these sacred places are always very efficacious. Consequently, they use these sacred places as a sort of prayer closets. Occasionally, (especially during their festivals), some of these churches perform ceremonious ascending of sacred mountains (*gigun ori oke)* where they spend three, seven, twenty one to forty days alone in spiritual exercises. These *ori oke* (mountain tops) *agbala* (vine yard) and *eti odo* (river side resort) are numerous around Yorubaland and their epithets betray their importance.

The practice of visiting sacred mountains by the *Aladura* constitutes a major factor of deliverance and conversion for these churches. Usually, the general atmosphere in these sacred places particularly on the mountains gives psychological and tension relief to worried soul as they 'climbed' *ori oke Olorun k'ole* (Mount of God) *Ori oke atunse* (mount of restoration) *oke igbala* (mount of salvation). *Oke Itusile* (mount of deliverance), *ori oke Olorun be mi wo* (mount of God's visitation). *CAC ori oke baba abiye* (CAC's mount of safe delivery) - located at Ede, Osun State, Nigeria, *ori oke Olorun seun* (mount of thanksgiving) *ori oke isegun* (mount of victory) among others scattered all over the entire region of Western Nigeria.

Ori Oke (Prayer Mountains)

Prayer Mountains made popular by the first generation indigenous churches abound across Nigeria. As noted in the introduction section of this work, some States of the South Western Nigeria have these Mountains with varying names such as Ori Oke Aluyo (Breakthrough Mountain) located at Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State; Ori Oke Ikoyi, (Ikoyi Mountain) Osun State; Ori Oke Agbara Aseyori (Power of Success Mountain), Osun State, Ori Oke Akoko Mi To (My time has come Mountain), Osun State; Baba

Shiloh Prayer Mountain, Ibadan-Ife Expressway, Oyo State; Ori Oke Irapada Oluwa (The Redemption of the Lord Mountain), Ibadan-Ife Expressway, Oyo State; Ori Oke Atunse (Mount of Restitution), Ibadan-Ife Expressway, Egbeda, Oyo State; Rehoboth Prayer Mountain, Ajegunle, Ogun State; Ancient of Days Prayer Mountain, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Erio Prayer Mountain in Ekiti State, Ori Oke Baba Abiye (Mount of safe delivery), Ede, Osun State among others.

Biblical basis for Prayer Mountains

Prayer is defined as a means of communication between man and the Supreme Being (God). People throng the Prayer Mountains in order to avoid unwholesome distractions. A visit to the Prayer Mountains is likened to being alone with God. In the Bible, Jesus took three of his disciples to the mountain during the transfiguration and also taught and prayed with them there (Mark 9: 2-7; Mt. 17: 1-13; Lk. 9: 28-36). Moses also was reported to have communicated with God on the mountain where he received the Ten Commandments (Exo. 19, 20). The practice of praying on mountains has its origin in the Bible, and offers many spiritual benefits for those who understand the importance. Praying on mountains (Ori Oke) helps a person stay focus, unlike what obtains when there is a mammoth crowd. Anyone who is desirous of serenity or calmness when praying, as well as a place that is very quiet, should go to any mountain to pray. This does not mean that if a sinner goes to Ori Oke (mountain tops) God will not answer. No! What these Aladura Churches are stressing is that the heart with which one prays is the germane thing. If one prays to God anywhere with a clean heart and with strong faith, the prayer will be heard (Uche: 2014).

Peculiarities of the Ori Oke

Some religious leaders as well as worshippers believe that Ori Oke (Prayer Mountains) are open to all people, depending on what the rules of the mountain specify. In the words of Prophet Michael Olubode "the Lord gives us freedom to pray anywhere, whether on

the mountain, inside your house, while bathing, eating, on your bed, anywhere". Ori Oke (Prayer Mountains) could be said to be special because of the inspiration people draw from such environments. It could be observed that at wake of the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), they were known for praying on the beaches. But the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and some other denominations are known for going to ori Oke (Prayer Mountains). There are three issues that make the Ori Oke (Prayer Mountains) peculiar. Foremost of these is that since the Prayer Mountains are not constituted into a church, it is expected that the place should have a leader. Again, there are rules guiding the activities taking place there. Also, the Prayer Mountains are multi-denominational, that is, open to people of many denominations.

The activities that occur on Prayer Mountains are numerous. On the mountains, people who have been favoured testified to the miracles they have received as a result of spending time on the Ori Oke (Prayer Mountains). Prayer Mountains welcome all, irrespective of denomination or religion, provided the individual is ready to follow the guiding rules, which include no burning of candles; no bathing of anybody on the mountain; no lying with ones spouse on the mountain. It is also against the rules to pay for prayers on the mountain. There are security guards at the entrance to the mountains and who inquired from new faces what their business at the mountain was. All Ori Oke (Prayer Mountains), contrary to assumptions, are not all gloom. Business activities take place such as sale of cooked food, snacks, bread, sweets, among others. And they are restricted to outside the premises of the holy ground.

A Prayer Mountain is a place of holiness. The prophet in charge of the mountain must also be genuinely called by God. Only the Bible is the possession allowed on the mountains. Eating as well is not allowed. They are strictly for prayers.

It is surprising at the kinds of people that go to Ori Oke for these prayers. Ideally, one would expect that only market women or illiterates and semi-literates would be seen visiting the Ori Oke (Prayer Mountains). However, a visit to any of the Ori Oke available in the areas aforementioned in this work reveals that not only the

destitute or those we can call the underdogs in the society go to these places but even the elites, the rich, the poor, educated, uneducated students, bankers, celebrities, travellers, business men and women among others go there for success in life endeavours. The mountains are open to everyone who is interested as long as they are willing to follow the rules guiding the activities of the places. They are open to those looking for jobs, promotions in their chosen careers, those waiting on the Lord for the fruits of the womb, those searching for spouses, peace of mind, and success in all life's situations and circumstances.

One thing so expected of anyone desirous of visiting Prayer Mountains is that such an one must be fully prepared in his/her spirit, he/she must also as a matter of requirement be holy and sanctified in order to receive of the Lord as the motive is. It was clearly and specifically stated in the Bible that anyone 'who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place, (must be) he that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully' (Psm. 24: 3-4). The body is seen as the temple of God and thus for a person to ascend the mountain he must be free of sin. He must be one with God in body and in spirit. One is climbing a place that is higher than things of the flesh and earthly thoughts. And for those who believe, God will bless them with his abundance.

What makes Ori Oke (Prayer Mountains) a holy place?

Ori Oke (Prayer Mountains) are places people withdraw themselves from all distractions of this world in order for them to concentrate on their communication with God and experience His grace and favour. As expected with any ventures of this world, in spite all sorts of oddities that do take place on the Ori Oke, one observes that have genuine Prayer Mountains still abound. A genuine Prayer Mountain must necessarily have a godly background with founder divinely directed by the spirit of God. This must come after several prayers and fasting. And the place itself sanctified with prayers, so that people who seek God in such places can have their

prayers answered unhindered. Thereafter such a place becomes a holy/revered ground. Some of these Prayer Mountains ensure for instance that women are separated from men to discourage distraction as it is believed that one who prays with a divided mind as he beholds the beautiful work of God in some women might have his prayers truncated thus leading to unanswered prayers. More so, no individual is allowed to stay beyond seven days so as to discourage them from abandoning their domestic duties under the guise of being on the mountain.

Prayer Mountains do not only provide a good environment for spiritual communication, they have also helped to boost religious unity, going by their multi-religious nature. Prayer Mountains offer spiritual sanctuary for their occupants and provide an almost direct link with God in the spirit. However, many reports have dotted the media space of various oddities (such as undue extortion of the visitors to the mountains by the hawkers of food items, promiscuous men and women to the places, among others) that take place on these mountains. Hence, it is important for clerics in charge of these mountains to enforce such rules that discourage distraction, immorality, proliferation of vices and illegal profiteering, whether in cash or in kind, by virtue of these mountains of prayer.

Pentecostalism on *Ori-Oke*

At the inception of the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), the emphasis of the founders then - Pastor Isaac Babalola Akinyele (later the Olubadan of Ibadan land), David Ogunleye Odubanjo, Joseph Sadare, Miss Sophia Odunlami, and (later apostle) Joseph Ayodele Babalola who fashioned it out as a "Prayer Group" characteristic of Faith Tabernacle witnessed in the early 20th century – was a paradigm shift in orthodoxy. However, when Joseph Ayodele Babalola became its leader in 1930, the group witnessed a significant transformation, it was a time of serious doctrinal disagreement between it and Anglican Communion on "divine healings, opposition to infant baptism, reliance on dreams and visions, abstention from

dancing, drumming, debt owing, drinking of alcohol, gambling and mixing with non-Christians".

The doctrinal disagreement between these Christian groups went for years without resolution. By mid - 1930s the Anglican Synod took a far-reaching decision, removing all the group's members from posts held in the Synod, expelled their children from Anglican schools. With this development, the group leader, Joseph Ayodele Babalola, wasted no time to adopt all the Faith Tabernacle beliefs, even went a little further to accept "baptism by holy spirit, spiritual manifestation of seeing visions, prophesying, speaking in tongues and dreaming".

The position of the group on new beliefs only set the pace for what would happen in the future- as two different camps within the (Pentecostal fold) the pro-European and Nigerian camp saw "Divine Healing" differently. The Nigerian camp under the leader of Joseph Babalola ultimately had an upper hand. In 1939, the Nigeria group adopted a new name "Apostolic Church," but later changed the name to "Nigerian Apostolic Church" in 1942. Between 1930 and 1959 (when Babalola died), the Church had undergone many structural and pastoral changes, the Church has nearly a century-old Pentecostal activity in Nigeria with thousands of members in Nigeria and other countries.

Some *Ori Oke* (Prayer Mountains) in existence

***Ori Oke* Ikoyi (Ikoyi Prayer Mountain)**

Ori Oke Ikoyi, established in 1935, at a time when idol worship, rituals, black magic, witchcraft and so many devilish acts were at their peak in the continent is known as a refuge in the mountain of God. It is located at Ede in Osun State Nigeria. This Prayer Mountain was said to be the most favourite of the late Apostle Babalola among the others from which he chose a particular spot where he did spent days praying before proceeding on any crusades. In 1959, shortly after the death of the late Prophet, as a result of the covenant of God that was believed domiciled on the mountain, people from the world over throng the place for miracle wrathing prayer. Like any of its

counterparts and other life ventures, it is expected that anyone going to this mountain must need go with his faith and with his/her anointing oil. Ikoyi Prayer Mountain has several prayer spots where both male and female do pray together but the top hedger on the mountain is strictly for men. This is a mountain where prayers are held for twenty-four (24) hours on a daily basis with instantaneous and one gets result immediately. This is one mountain that is been patronized results as it is noted that the power of God resides there with His people on this mountain. Consequently we see all the crème-de-la-crème in Nigerian society and in the diaspora trooping to this mountain to pray on yearly, monthly or quarterly basis.

Ori Oke Aanu (Mountain of Mercy)

Ori Oke Aanu (Mountain of Mercy) Praying Ground located at Erio-Ekiti in Ekiti State Nigeria is another of the earliest Prayer Mountains established by Prophet Joseph Ayodele Babalola during his life time. There is a spot on top of the mountain rock where he knelt to pray and his knee pierced through, leaving a giant hole in the rock due to his long hours in praying. Many celebrities and men of God have one or two testimonies coming to Ori-Oke Aanu. And the mountain is open to everyone while some great prophets who believe in Babalola's wonders link their own calling to God of Babalola Ori Oke Erio to start their own ministry there on the mountain.

Ori Oke Babalola (Babalola's Prayer Mountain) at Odo-Owa

This mountain is situated in the ancient city of Odo-Owa in Oke-Ero Local Government Area of Kwara State the hometown of the Late Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola. Most Christians and especially the adherents of Ayodele Babalola prefer to tag this birth place of the Apostle as mini holy land in the manner of the Muslims who pay yearly pilgrimages to mecca the birth place of prophet Muhammed their leader. There is a small stream called Odo-Iwosan (healing stream) said to have been sanctified by the Apostle to heal the community at the time of the ravaging chicken pox in the time of the Apostle's evangelism that killed the adults and children then. This stream on information gathered, is said not to have for once run dry

since the sanctification in 1946. Due to this special quality of the stream, lots of people from all walks of life are found on regular basis trooping in with kegs to take the water to which many have also given testimonies to the superlative healing power of God in the stream.

Ori Oke Efon Alaaye (Efon Alaaye Prayer Mountain)

At Efon -Alaaye an ancient town in Ekiti West Local Government Area of Ekiti State, many of these Ori Oke under view abound. "Prayer town" as is popularly referred owing to numerous Prayer Mountains where people who have business with God concerning their lives go for spiritual incubation and special prayer. It could also be observed that Efon Alaaye has metamorphosed into a tourist centre as many of the adherents of Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) as well as other believers go to either to pray at the grave side of the late Apostle Ayodele Babalola or sleep in the mausoleum with the sole belief that the spirit of Apostle Babalola would ameliorate their problem. Kegs of water are taken to the grave believing that the power of the Apostle is still potent and could still perform miracles as done when alive. Omi iye (stream water popularly called Holy water, said to have been blessed by the late Prophet Babalola, potent for healing and miracles is also a feature one gets to see on this mountain. People come from all walks to take from the Omi iye (Holy water) said to be blessed before the departure of the late Prophet Ayodele Babalola. After taking the water from the stream, the water would be taken to the grave side for prayer. By this onerous act, many people have received miracles and healings from all kinds of diseases as people have it that the power of Babalola is still there. In all of these, faith is the basic requirement before any miracle can happen. One peculiar thing about the Efon Alaaye Prayer Mountain is that the olive oil or water pray upon at the grave gives an instant healing, since people have the belief that when prayer is said on the oil or water that is placed on the grave and is taken home, rubbed on the body or drank, whatever the curses or bad dream laced on one will stop. As earlier referred, celebrities in the society as well as renown men of God pay visits to this prayer ground at intervals of 15 days or every month as majority were won't do.

Ori Oke Ido Ajinarere (Mountain far away)

This Prayer Mountain was discovered by the late Apostle Ayodele Babalola in early forties. Its location is in Ido-Ile town of Ekiti West Local Government Area. From available evidences gotten from the custodians of the mountain, and like most of the sites of many church buildings and sacred places in Yorubaland, Ido Ajinarere was a forbidden forest that inhabited lots of evil spirits and dangerous animals and as its name sounded, it was very far away from the town. However, Ayodele Babalola received the direction from God to go to this mountain and meet with Him. Abinitio, this seemingly highest mountain ever discovered or established by Apostle Babalola had no stairway that leads to its top thus puzzling majority at how he was able to ascend it. But now stairways had been provided to making it easy for visitors to ascend it without much stress. The Ido Ajinarere Mountain has three specifically different hills - the first being said to be meant for general; the second, about twenty minutes' walk to the main one is meant strictly for women while the third which is on the hill is reckoned as the "power house" of the late Apostle Babalola in his life time. Tradition has it that he started from the very first till he got the instruction from God to proceed until he got to the last. And while on this mountain, a huge python snake came out of the thick forest crossing over the Apostle where he laid flat. As the snake was moving down his body, the miraculous was happening in that the snake was detaching and drying off instantaneously. This mountain takes about an hour when ascending it and most of its visitors are "men of God" designate who claimed they heard God asking them to meet Him there. The presence of God on this mountain is a matter of attention to many today.

Conclusion

A common feature of these Prayer Mountains is their emphasis or reliance on prayers. It is observable that prayer not only forms their bedrock but they also believe that prayer is the fountain head of all their blessings and successes. Visitors to these Ori Oke (Prayer

Mountains) are encouraged to commit every situation of life in the hand of God. In our investigation, we observed that many of the people visiting these mountains are not members of the CAC but members of the mainline churches and some Pentecostals as well as the so called white garment churches. They attend different programmes on the mountains in order to pray and seek solution to their problems. Aylward Shorter opines that prayer in the mission churches is stereotyped, memorized or read, fitting all circumstances. Emotions and feelings are very important elements in prayer as it is understood by the African and they determine the depth, the sincerity, even the worth of the prayer, not to talk of the wording and the mood. Such prayer can only be spontaneous. African prayer is what may be termed "charismatic improvisation" prompted by the need of the moment. Such prayers are long and at times are accompanied with fasting. In some of the churches the members are encouraged to bring bottles of water for prayers especially as they go to seek the face of God on the mountain tops so as to pray about protection and find solution to some (if not all) of their problems.

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Chapter 29

A Semiotic Study of the African Religious Beliefs on *Orí-Òkè*: Insights from *Ifá* among the Yorùbá People of Nigeria

Òkéwándé Olúwọlé Tẹ́wọ́gboyè

Abstract

Ifá *is believed to be the foundation of Yorùbá culture. This means every aspect of Yorùbá life, including religion, philosophy, science, ideology, and so on has one link or another with* ***Ifá****. However, as important* ***Ifá*** *is among the Yorùbá people of Nigeria, the semiotic elements that account for the religious values of* ***Orí-Òkè*** *and or* ***Òkè*** *is open to research. This study relies substantially on Yorùbá literary texts, especially* ***Ifá*** *literary corpus. Semiotics, which is the science of signs, is adopted for the analysis of the data, because, symbolism underlies* ***Ifá*** *divination system. It is discovered by this study that, the semiotic religious nomenclature of* ***Orí-Òkè*** *is evinced in* ***Ifá*** *around or into linguistic, historicity,* ***Odù****/poetic/musico-poetic and panegyric codes. It is equally found out in this study that* ***Orí-Òkè****, in* ***Ifá*** *symbolism, is an iconic symbol of longevity, victory, immovable, immortality and a symbol of good luck. Likewise, names such as* ***Òkè, Òkèṣìnà, Òkèbùnmi, Òkèwándé, Òkédòkun, Òkèdìran, Òkètádé, Okètọ́lá, Òkètọ́ba, Òkèbùkọ́lá*** *among others are symbols that have affinities with* ***Òkè*** *divinity among the Yorùbá people till today. These semiotic significations about* ***Orí-Òkè*** *show that, spiritual importance is associated with* ***Orí-Òkè*** *among the Yorùbá people.*

Introduction

This work examines the semiotic elements of *Orí-Òkè* as entrenched in *Ifá*. *Orí-Òkè* is a sacred place, mostly above the level of the ground, where people offer prayer or sacrifice. *Ifá* has been defined by scholars in different ways that establish the inexplicable and unlimited scope of its knowledge, wisdom and values. Indeed, it is

regarded as the bedrock of other aspects of Yorùbá life. Therefore, to simply define *Ifá* as a religion, without exploring its social and cultural links will be inadequate. Akíntọ́lá (1999) sees *Ifá* as the philosophy of or wisdom divinely revealed to the Yorùbá deity of *Ifá*, *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*.

Munoz (2003, p. 179) sees *Ifá's* scope beyond the Yorùbá cultural society when he says "*Ifá* is the most universal divinity among the Yorùbá and other West African people." *Ifá* is known to different people by different names throughout the world. For example, *Ifá* is known as *Fá* among the Fon of Republic of Benin, *Eva* to Nupes, *Ifá* in Cuba, USA, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Surinam and Togo. *Ifá* is referred to by the Ewe as *Afa*, *Ephod* by Jews, *Geomancy* by Europeans and Margays (Ọdẹ́yẹmí 2013). With these different realizations of *Ifá* nomenclature which cut across nations of the world, the prominence of *Ifá* is not in doubt. In fact, *Ifá* has over 70 million followers in Africa and the America. In 2005, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed *Ifá* as one of the 86 traditions of the world to be recognized as masterpieces of oral and intangible heritage of humanity (Robinson 2008). By this proclamation, *Ifá* joined the league of heritages and therefore requiring urgent preservation. *Ifá*, has over time been of great interest to scholars in different areas of human endeavours, like medicine, philosophy, religion, art and culture. The importance of *Ifá* makes it to have one influence or the other on the Yorùbá people. According to Akintola (1999, pp. 3&4):

> *Ifá* is the natural and logical starting point for any meaningful study which aims at identifying, interpreting, analysing and evaluating these expressions which constitute Yorùbá philosophical thought…In all embracing relevance, the *Ifá* system serves as the architectonic force portraying the wholeness and completeness of Yorùbá life mode. In fact, in scope, it provides not only the religious and spiritual philosophy, but also the alchemical or kabalaic support for the people. It is the fountain– source of Yorùbá wisdom and the never- dying source of Yorùbá system of thoughts…

Therefore, every other aspect of the Yorùbá life must be connected in one way or the other with *Ifá*.

Yémitàn and Ògúndélé (1970, p. ix) assert about *Ifá* that, "ó jẹ́ ìmọ̀ ìjìnlẹ̀ lọ́tọ̀ ara rẹ̀, ohun tí a lè pè ní ẹ̀ka ìmọ̀ sáyẹ́ǹsì. Èkejì, ó jẹ́ oríṣìí ẹ̀sìn ìbílẹ̀ ilẹ̀ Yorùbá kan." (It is knowledge of science on its own. Secondly, it is a separate Yorùbá religion). The implication of this statement is that, *Ifá's* knowledge can be better understood by scientific analysis or literary theory. According to Rorty (1989, pp. 449-53) "… scientific theory begins to look indistinguishable from literary theory… Science, is said to deals with hard facts, and other areas of culture should either imitate, or confess their inability to imitate, the scientists' respect for brute factuality." This means, any finding that is not scientifically or theoretically based may just be a mirage as, such findings will be assumption, speculation or suggestion. Therefore, the religious or spiritual importance of *Orí-Òkè* as entrenched in *Ifá* is desirable, because of the great importance and impact of *Orí-Òkè* among the Yorùbá divinities and African religion believers generally and *Ifá* in particular.

Ọdẹ́yẹmí (2013, p. 6) categorizes importance of *Ifá's* scope into eight: The spiritual essence, the religious essence, the divine essence, the worship and sacrificial essence, the medicinal essence, the historical essence, the scientific essence and the cultural essence. From these *Ifá's* scopes, one can establish the divergence of its knowledge and beliefs in all aspects of life of Yorùbá people in particular and humanity in general. However, the scientific or literary theory that analyses the religious importance of *Orí-Òke* among the Yorùbá in particular and *Ifá* worshipers generally is open to research scholarship.

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

Semiotics, which is the study of science of signs, is adopted for this work because, *Ifá* that is the central element in this work communicates in signs and symbols through the interaction of divination objects. Semiotics can be traced to the pioneering works of Charles Sanders Peirce, the American philosopher and Ferdinand

de Saussure, the Swiss Linguist. According to Saussure, semiology is the study of signs as part of social life. He focuses on the functions of social and cultural phenomenon within semiotic system. Saussure (1974, p. 60) classifies signs into two entities: "signified and or sign-vehicle or meaning." He refers to the signified, mostly in form of materials (objects, images, sounds and so on). Saussure is credited with structuralism approach. To him, language is formed by signs which are related in multiple ways. A sign or a word consists of two parts: one part is its form; the other part is its meanings. The association between form and meaning of a sign is fixed by conventions of language use. The link between the form and meaning are inseparable.

According to Peirce, Semiotics is an abstract entity. Sign is something which stands to somebody or something in some respects or capacity. This relation of 'standing for' is mediated by an interpretant. According to Peirce (1931, p. 35), "a sign is anything which determines something else (its interpretant) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its object) in the same way the interpretant becoming in turn a sign." This means anything can be adopted as a sign.

Three modes of significations are regarded to be sufficient to describe any form of sign. These are icon, symbol and index. In an iconic mode, the signifier is perceived as resembling or imitating the signified in one way or the other. According to Peirce, one can perceive a direct resemblance between the signifier and the signified. For instance, a picture of an individual is an iconic symbol. This may be in form of an animal. This belief is associated with some Yorùbá traditions that forbid some families to eat, kill or harm some animals. It is forbidden for the *Alápà's* family to eat, kill or harm snakes, just as for the twins or the family of twins to eat any species of monkey as explained earlier. These animals are believed by Yorùbá tradition to be the families' ancestors (Káyọ̀dé 1984).

In symbol mode, there is no resemblance or connection between the signifier and the signified, that is, the object and what it stands for. A symbol's connection with its object is a matter of convention, rule or agreement between the users. In Yorùbá tradition, it can be

realized in form of *Àrokò*, as such an object or something stands for something or somebody in real life. For instance, the Yorùbá believe that "fish" stands for negative and "crab" for positive or to determine the "yes" or "no" of an interrogative statement such as "ẹja n bákàn?" (fish or crab?). It is culturally accepted that "fish" symbolizes (stands for) no or negative and "crab" symbolizes (stands for) yes or positive.

In an indexical mode, the signifier is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some ways (physically or casually) to the signified. For instance, "odor" is an index for the presence of a he-goat around. This makes Yorùbá to say "òrúkọ dé òórùn dé" (a he-goat is around with odor) or in a statement such as "bíná bá jó lóko mọ̀jàlà ni yóó ṣòfófó" (*mọ̀jàlà* is the tell-tale of the bush burning) (Ṣótúndé 2009, p. 178).

The link rule of signs and their meanings are made known by code. According to Geoffrey and Short (1981, p. 124) a code is "a means of conveying messages, a vehicle of communication." This may be realized in a multi-level coding. Code helps to simplify phenomena in order to make it easier to communicate experience. Codes are realized in different forms: poetic, musico-poetic, panegyrics, linguistic, mythic and behavioural codes among others.

The knowledge of semiotics covers different aspects of human life. This work adopts the cultural semiotics, which is concern with the use of cultural objects or signs, including human symbolization associated with cultural meanings and beliefs. In other words, symbols play very important roles on the culture of a society. This opinion is observed by Ìṣọ̀lá (2010, p. 36) when he says "if you leave out the religion, you are left with deformed culture."

A sign can create multiple meanings, depending on the culture in which it exists. Some cultural values are invented on some individual because of the Yorùbá belief about them. For instance, there is transfer of the 'divinity value' on an albino. To the Yorùbá people, "ọ̀wọ̀ òrìṣà la fi ń wo àfín." (honour of divinity is bestowed on albino). It is the religious belief of the Yorùbá that such an individual such as an albino is an icon of god. The application of the cultural categories depends on the individual or personal knowledge.

Therefore, proper cultural and religious symbolization and signification of cultural objects, signs and symbols are necessary for the interpretation of cultural meaning. According to Lobner (2002, p. 201), "but we are all some ways apart from commanding all cultural knowledge, as we all have little experience in many areas of everyday life." The distinction between the semantic knowledge and world knowledge (for example, cultural and personal knowledge) is a doctrine of cultural semiotics. In this instance, the understanding of the semiotic significations of *Orí-Òkè* is desirable in order to interpret the *Orí-Òkè* symbolism in *Ifá* as the mouthpiece for all the Yorùbá divinities.

This work makes use of *Ifá* corpora, *ọfọ̀* (incantation), *oríkì* (praise poetry), and proverbs. These sources provide a reliable database, believed to be free from human manipulations. According to Àtàndá (1980, p. 29), the available written materials, especially on *Ifá,* are enough to carry out formidable academic research in literary studies. He says "But what still survives in oral tradition and oral literature, particularly in the *Ifá* corpus is a good indication of the intellectual achievement of the Yorùbá." The sources of the data are free from the constraints of authorship, this means, and these materials are the properties of the Yorùbá community rather than individual (Ọlájubù 1981). The information through these medium is therefore dependable. According to Ọlábímtán (1981, p. 13), the materials are "preserved undisturbed as they have been for generations and handed down intact by each succeeding generation."

In Yorùbá tradition, the earliest forms of communication were oral stories and histories that were passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. The *Ifá* corpus epistle is therefore believed to be preserved in preliterate societies. It is a medium which, according to Abímbọ́lá (1983, p. 10), "could develop, preserve and disseminate bodies of academic knowledge even without knowing the act of writing." Abímbọlá failed to see African symbols as a medium of writing. The problem associated with the African form of writing is the discovering, reading and interpreting these writings. This problem still persists till today, the challenge that is taken up in this study by interpreting the *Orí-Òkè* symbolism as evinced from *Ifá.*

For instance, this challenge has been canvassed by Alain (2009, p. 9) that:

> Symbolism has been the topic of several studies. It is indeed of the utmost importance because these symbols are in close relation to speech: they are produced within the speech communities and demand interpretation by this communities. They fulfil one of the essential functions of writing: recording information and enabling its retrieval… Some objects elicit a verbal response and this encapsulates a text. The systemic use of objects can function like writing…

Ifá's corpus materials remain intact till date. Some of the Yorùbá religious writing systems, especially *Ifá, Orí-Òkè* are realized in this study through the "semiotic lens": linguistic, historicity, *Odù*/poetic/musico-poetic and panegyric codes within *Ifá* rubric. The needs to study and interpret the society's symbols have been viewed by Maciver and Page (1949, pp. 153&4) because,

> all communication, whether through language or otherwise, makes use of symbols. Society could scarcely exist without them…In many primitive societies the identification of the symbol and the things symbolized a common "semantic failing" in all societies is often so complete with the symbol…The symbol is at once a definite focus of interest, a means of communication, and a common ground of understanding…This is a peculiar property of the cultural symbol…The fact helps to explain the role of symbolism in the more mystical forms of religion…Many symbols are, in fact, "morale symbols" suggesting and conveying the sense of group or spirit de corpse.

The identification, description, understanding and interpretation of symbols' meaning in the people's beliefs, thoughts and manners of life cannot be separated. The mode of these symbol codifications as they relate to the African religions generally and as in this case, *Orí-Òkè* has been subject of research scholarship for long.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the belief of the Yorùbá people on *Orí-Òkè* or *Òkè* symbolism in their religious life. *Ifá*, that is believed to be the springboard of the Yorùbá culture is used as a reference because, *Ifá* is the spokesperson for all other Yorùbá divinities. In other words, *Ifá's* "testimonies" about *Orí-Òkè* is established in this study.

Discussion

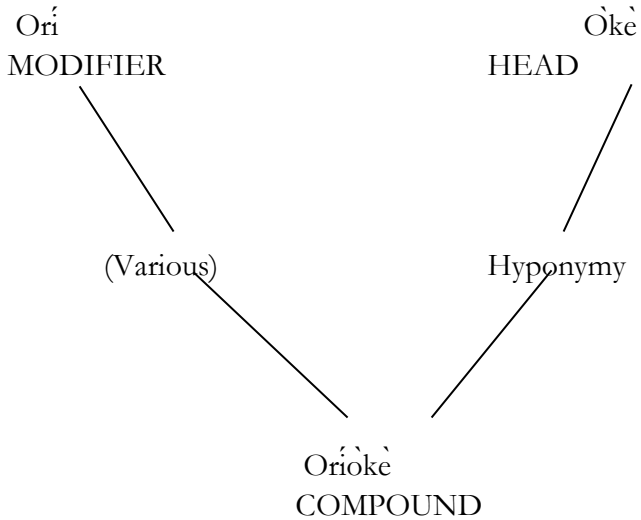
Linguistic, *Odù*/Poetic/Musico-Poetic, Historicity and Panegyric Codes of *Orí-Òkè* in *Ifá*

Linguistic Code of *Orí-Òkè*

The semiotic understanding of *Orí-Òkè* in Yorùbá religious beliefs will be inadequate, misrepresented and misunderstood without proper examination and explanation of the lexical and semantic structure of the word. In Yorùbá tradition, name is associated with semiotics as it is a signifier (name) of the signified (individual or thing). The word formation of *Orí-Òkè* is derived by compounding. This process of word formation in regards to *Orí-Òkè* comprises of two nouns: *Orí* and *Òkè*. The opinion of Lobner (2002, pp. 86&7) sheds more light on a word formed by regular compound such as *Orí-Òkè* that:

A regular compound has two parts, the first is called modifier, the second the head; the modifier adds a specification to the meaning of the head noun…The meaning of the modifier is also bound into the meaning of the compound, but not in the same way as the meaning of the head…The meaning relation is a special relation to be defined in terms of what the referents of the modifier and the compound have to do with each other. Referents of the first are sold in the referents of the second.

These statements in relation to *Orí-Òkè* show that *Òkè* is the head noun for *Orí*, the modifier. The meaning relation of *Orí* is referent in *Òkè*. This is further illustrated below:



Meaning relation between a regular compound and its part
(Adapted from Lobner 2002, p. 87)

The linguistic code of word composition of *Orí-Òkè* is demonstrated above as established in *Ifá* poetic and *Odù* codes. For example, the *Odù Ọ̀kànràn Ọ̀sẹ́* contained in Sàlámí (2002, p. 444) (with author's translation) that:

> …*Awo Orí lo difá fún Orí*…
> *Awo Òkè lo difá fún Òkè*…
> *Orí àti Òkè ni bọ̀ wá láti ìkọ̀lé ọ̀run.*
> *Òkè lo kọ́kọ́ dé*….
> *lo mú ilẹ̀*…
> The *Babalawo* of *Orí* casts divination for *Orí*…
> The *Babalawo* of Highland casts divination for Highland…
> *Orí* and the Highland were coming from to the earth.
> The Highland got to the earth first
> chose a good place to reside…

The above *Ifá* poems in *Odù* code show that *Orí* and *Òkè* are primordial divinities. However, *Òkè* is the head for *Orí*, even though, the two divinities are in complementary relation. It has earlier been explained that the referent of the modifier, *Orí* is referent in the head,

Òkè. Ifá, recognizes the compatibility of religious roles of both *Òkè* and *Orí* and the output or outcome of these roles are associated with the importance that is placed on *Orí-Òkè*. By this code, one is able to account for the synergy between *Òkè* and *Orí* as divinities that complement each other. In Yorùbá religious belief, no god works in isolation and succeed, *àwo ni í gbáwo nígbọ̀wọ́*. The dual relationship between *Orí* and *Òkè* is equally noted between *Odù* and *Ifá*, as in *Odùufá* (Ifá corpus). *Odù* is a divinity and *Ifá* is also a divinity. Perhaps, this informs why at least two divinities are worshipped in a Yorùbá family. Fádípẹ̀ (1970, p. 254) opines that "There is hardly any family, in whatever part of Yorubaland, who worships only one òrìṣà."

Historicity and Mythical codes of *Orí-Òkè* in *Ifá*

"*Ẹsẹ-Ifá* is a type of 'historical' poetry. Every poem of *Ifá* is an attempt to narrate, through the particular structure of *Ifá* divination poetry, things which the *Ifá* priest has been taught to believe actually happened in the past by narrating these stories of the past …" Abímbọ́lá (1977a, p. 20). Myth, in Greek language means muthos that is 'narrative'. Eco (1976, p. 69) opined that "myths, legends, and popular or folk literature, in general, are of the greatest interest for semiology …" Myths are sourced from stories in forms of folk-literature, legend, historical, traditional or oral poems that constitutes *Ifá* corpus. Myth is a means by which we understand some ancient problems. According to Kennedy and Gioia (2007, p. 254), myths "… implicitly symbolize some profound truth about human or natural existence…" Every culture recognizes myths and its impact and influence are equally felt in human life. According to Cohen (p. 53) "One of the characteristics, signs and symbols of a specific cultural society is the fact that it makes no difference whether the myth in question is that of a story that actually took place. Whether it is the product of the imagination, or whether it was merely a work of literature or the lyrics of a poem."

Myths in a given culture serve as historical and cultural semiotics, since those myths relate to the activities of past events in the remote time. The extent to which we can accept or reject myths is sometimes

minimal, since the time is located to in 'remote' period in a society. However, some events of today are influenced by the past, and myths explain the origin of human existence and experience. Myths can be classified into different types such as cosmic, heroes and gods and pantheon myths (Ògúnlọlá (2014, p. 7). However, the myth of gods and pantheon is relevant to the understanding of *Orí-Òkè*.

Myths form a vital aspect of the basis of *Ifá* corpus. According to Abímbọ́lá (1977a, p. 15), *Ifá* corpus "has been so closely identified with the mythology, folklore, folk-medicine, history, religious and value system of that culture as to be about synonymous with it." *Ẹsẹ-Ifá* remains the main source of information about Yorùbá mythology (Abímbọ́lá 1977a, p. 32). It is by these mythological documents in *Ifá* that we are able to solve some cultural problems.

The history of *Orí-Òkè* or *Òkè* is coded in *Ifá* poems. For instance, *Ẹ̀jìOgbè* contains in Adéoyè (1985, p. 161) accounts for the history of *Òkè*. He is known as Ajibíṣe in heaven. "Igbà tí ó rọ̀ dé ilé ayé ni a sọ ọ́ ní Òkè." (when he descended on the surface of the earth he was named Òkè). His father in heaven is *Onídjan*. *Afohunpamọ́* was his confidant. There may be no other divinity that has enemies as *Òkè*, but he always prevailed over his enemies. Because of the persistence confrontations between *Òkè* and other divinities he was advised to go back to heaven. However, *Òkè* consulted *Ifá* oracle and sought advice from his friend, *Afohunpamọ́* on what to do; especially, the decision that will make him to prevail over his enemies. He complied with the sacrifice order from *Ifá*. At the spot (on the ground) where the sacrifice was placed, four hunch-back men came out and were digging the ground, the spot wherein *Òkè* hypothesized. On the spot, very big heap of sand was formed. This event brought people (including his enemies) to the spot to admire *Òkè*. Ever since, *Òkè* is always admired, adored and worshiped. The admiration makes people to be climbing and descending the mountain.

Orí, as explained earlier, on getting to the earth and met *Òkè* performed the sacrifice order from *Ifá* on how he can as well be established. *Orí* preformed the sacrifice order that was ordered to be placed on the base of *Òkè* which attracted the birds to take some parts and fly to the top of the mountain. This event makes the

sacrifice of *Orí* to be accepted on the head of the mountain. It will be recalled that the *Odù Ọ̀kàràn Ọ̀sẹ́* as contained in Sàlámì (2002, p. 444) accounts for the coming together of the two divinities: *Orí* and *Òkè*. Their journey from heaven continues on the surface of the earth.

Odù/Poetic/Musico-Poetic codes of *Orí-Òkè* in *Ifá*

The main channel of communication between *Ifá* and client/supplicant is solely through *Odù* code rendered mostly in poems. *Odù* is the power of *Ifá*. Abímbọlá (1976, p. 26) says "the Odù are regarded as divinities in their own right." The accessibility of the voice (wishes of the gods) is made possible by *Odù* symbols. These are in two categories: the major or principal *Odù-Ifá*, in sixteen *Odù* and the minor or mixtures of *Odù* in two hundred and forty units of *Odù*. This makes a total number of *Odù-Ifá* to be two hundred and fifty six. These numbers of *Odù-Ifá* are described to be sufficient to take care of all human and non-human situations of life.

The message of *Ifá* is an archetype of what had happened in the past as it is connected with the *Ifá* divination situation. These *Ifá* archetypes events and stories are rendered in poetic code (*Ifá* corpus) (Abímbọ́lá, 1976, p. 31). The *Odù Ìrẹtẹ̀ Méjì* contained in Abímbọ́lá (1977b, pp. 80&1) says that the sacrifice performed by *Òkè* was ordered to be placed along the way, road or path. According to the *Odù*, rendered in poetic code:

…Òkè sì rubọ…
Nígbà tí ó rúbọ tán
Àwọn awo rẹ̀ ní kí ómú díẹ̀
ninú ẹbọ tí ó rú náà
kí ó gbé e sí ẹ̀bá ọ̀nà,
kí ó ṣe àmì rẹ̀ dáa dáa.
Wọ́n ní nígbà to bá dode ìsalayé
yóò bá ire rẹ̀ lẹ́bàá ọ̀nà…
Òkè a tọ̀nà taàrà dó sí eti ọ̀nà
Nibi tí Òkè dó sí
ló ti ń gbosin,

ló ti ń gbọrẹ

Òkè performed the sacrifice
After the sacrifice was performed
His cults instructed that portion of the sacrifice be taken
and be put along the road
and to mark it properly.
They told him when he gets to the Earth
He will meet his fortunes along the way…
Òkè, the one that resides along the road
Where *Òkè* is established
is where he is worshiped
and where gifts were offered to him.

From this *Odù-Ifá, Òkè* is mostly found along the way or road. Any sacrifice order to him must equally be where *Òkè* resides.

The Yorùbá musico-poetic tradition is categorized into two: traditional and neo-traditional. The pre-colonial forms are regarded as traditional while, the ones introduced during and after the colonial periods but follows the traditional patterns are regarded as neo-traditional (Ògúndèjì 1988). The traditional pattern is however associated with *Ifá* and *Orí-Òkè*. Poetic code is realized in poems or verses form in the performances of *Ifá* and *Orí-Òkè/Òkè*. For instance, the departure of *Òkè* from the surface of the earth attracted mammoth crowd to come and look at the *Òkè*, symbolized with mountain. There was melody of the voice of the four hunch-back men earlier mentioned inside the mountain in musico-poetic code that:

Ọkọ́ máa ró wọnran, wọnran.
Àdá máa ró wọnran, wọnran.
Òkè n bẹ laìkú, wọnran.
Ọkọ́ máa ró wọnran, wọnran. (Adeoye 1985, p. 162)

Hoe be making sound *wọnran, wọnran.*
Cutlass be making sound *wọnran, wọnran.*

Òkè is there immortal *wọnran.*
Hoe be making sound *wọnran, wọnran*

Traditional equipment that can be used to level hills or mountains are cutlass and hoe. The use of these equipment to level the mountain or hill symbolized by *Òkè* make no any effect on *Òkè*, but instead, *Òkè* remains insurmountable, even with the use of equipment (cutlass and hoe). This is to be further discussed under iconic symbols of *Òkè/Orí-Òkè.*

Panegyric code of *Orí-Òkè*

Panegyric (*Oríkì*) is praise epithet of individual linage and divinities, and its relevance to the study of Yorùbá religion. It is a means by which someone is remembered "within the history of his family clan and tribe" (Odùyọyè 1972, p. 72). It serves as a means of identification (Ọlábímtán 1988, p. 169). It is descriptive in nature (Babalọlá 2000, pp. 9-11), while Láṣebìkan (1958, p. 31) says it connects an individual with the ancestors. Barber (1991, p. 25) asserts that *oríkì* is based on history. She opines that "*Oríkì* are essentially historical in the sense that they are one of the ways in which the relationship of the present with the past is constituted. This means that the past including the gods and the ancestors are connected with the present by *oríkì*

Some features of *Òkè* are known by his *oríkì* (panegyrics). For example, *oríkì Òkè* (Oke panegyrics) is contained in Adeoye (1985, p. 165) rendered in panegyric code as:

Òkè Ládéọ̀kín Ajíbíṣe
Òkè gbogbo ẹ̀ lọmọ
Dúdú n kọ̀ọ̀rọ̀ Elẹ́wẹ́dẹ́
A ní ńlá bí ìfun Àjànàkú
Òkè kéé kèè kéé
ni yíkè yíkè í yí
Ta ní le yí Ṣóbí
Ta ní le yí Ẹlẹ́gbàá

Ta ní le yí Tengá…

Òkè Ládéọ̀kín Ajíbíṣe
Òkè, there is no small of it
Black in complexion, the *Elẹ́wẹ́dẹ́*
Big as the intestine of an Elephant
It is small small small *Òkè*
that someone can round
Who can round up *Òkè Ṣóbí*?
Who can round up *Òkè Ẹlẹ́gbàá*?
Who can round up *Òkè Tengá?…*

From the *oríkì* of *Òkè* above, every Yorùbá name that bears the name; *Òkè* derives his panegyrics from this code *Òkè Ládéọ̀kín*. This is because, *Òkè* is *orúkọ àmúntọ̀runwá* (is a celestial Yorùbá name), as *Òkè*, the progenitor, was the first individual to bear this name. One can also classify *Òkè* to two: small and big. Some big *Òkè* mentioned in the *oríkì* above show that some *Òkè* are so big that no one can round them. This shows the attributive power possessed by *Òkè*. The metaphor of his mighty is likened to the stomach of an Elephant as no any animal's stomach can be bigger than that of an Elephant.

Iconic Symbols and Symbols of *Orí-Òkè/Òkè* in *Ifá*

One of the semiotic significations of *Orí-Òkè* and *Òkè* is realized as iconic symbols. That is, what *Orí-Òkè* or *Òkè* represents or stand for in the Yorùbá religious belief as enshrines in *Ifá*. One of the reasons why *Orí-Òkè* is valued, appreciated and given attention by Yorùbá is their belief in the "religious values" derived from *Orí-Okè*. *Ifá* encapsulates *Orí-Okè* in iconic symbols of longevity, victory, immovable and immortality.

Fádípẹ̀ (1970, p. 264) refers to *Orí* "as the Orìṣà of good luck…of course, every individual has the shrine of Orí (lit., head) in his own head which must be touched with whatever is to be sacrificed to Orí as well as when invocation of any sort is made to Orí." Therefore, *Orí* is a symbol of good luck. Supplication on the top of the

mountain, *Orí-Okè* is spiritually implied. In other words, it is *Òkè* that the sacrifice is offered to, by reaching or touching *Orí* (head: climbing to the top) of *Òkè*.

The *Èjì-Ogbè* contained in Agboọlá (2012, pp. 182-8) establishes that *Orí-Òkè* is an icon of longevity. This symbol possessed by *Orí-Òkè* has made him as a divinity to be regarded and respected among other divinities, including *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*, who is the *Ifá* divination progenitor. *Òkè* was consulted by *Ọ̀runmìlà*/*Ifá* as the only dependable and reliable divinity to provide long life, which the Yorùbá believe is the peak of wealth. According to the *ÈjìOgbè* (with author's translation):

> *…Ọ̀rúnmìlà ní a ò ráwo rere kọ́ṣe fá fún ni mọ́.*
> *Wọ́n ní awo rere ńbẹ.*
> *Ó ní awo wo ni…*
> *àwọn òkè gàngà awo rere ni wọ́n ń ṣe.*
> *Ọ̀rúnmìlà ní kí wọ́n lọ rèé ké sí wọn wá.*
> *Òkè gàngà dé ó ṣefá fún Ọ̀rúnmìlà.*
> *Ìgbà yìí ọdún wá yí kọdún.*
> *Ewú wá kúnrí gbẹ́ru gbẹ́ru gbẹ́ru.*
> *Tití la ó máa yìn yín láwo*
> *Tití la ó máa yìn yín láwo…*
> *Òkè gàngà.*
> *Tití la ó máa yìn yín láwo*
> …*Ọ̀rúnmìlà* inquired if there was no more good *awo* to prepare work for one.
> They responded that *awo* was available.
> He asked who the *awo* was….
> They responded that *awo* was available.
> He asked who the *awo* was
> They replied that *Òkè gàngà* was really a good *awo*
> *Òrúnmìlà* then sent for him.
> *Òkè gàngà* came and did *Ifá* work for *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*.
> After so many years, his head was full of grey hair.
> I will forever praise you as a good *awo*
> I will forever praise you as a good awo…

Òkè gàngà the good *awo*…
I will forever praise you as a good *awo*

Èjì Ogbè reaffirms the dependable and reliable divinatory power of *Òkè* among all other divinities. Divination here, has a metaphorical import, which means, supplication rendered by or through *Òkè* or *Orí-Òkè* is "prayer answered." The word *awo* (cult) has spiritual and ethical connotations. To the Yorùbá, no god succeeds without the assistance of another. In Yorùbá tradition, *awo* or *ìmùlẹ̀* is a cult. The intimacy of *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* and *Orí-Òkè/Òkè* is discernible. The word *awo* is a local word, in some instances realized as *ìmùlẹ̀* (cult). In other words, it is neither burrowed nor alien to Yorùbá culture. According to Ilésanmí (2004, p. 9), "each professional discipline has a prefix of *awo* means a specialized training involving a gradual and a graduated system of acquisition of knowledge whereby one does not proceed to the next step until one has mastered the preceding steps. Only initiated apprentices are allowed into the guild to acquire the specialized knowledge associated with the training. And no one is given liberty to practice the acquired art until the final step is mastered…"

The implication of these statements is to demonstrate that *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* was rescued by *Òkè/Orí-Òkè* during his trying period, as the two divinities are *awo* (cult), working for the success of each other. *Orí-Òkè/Òkè* was seen as a dependable divinity, whose his divination was reliable than proliferations of other unreliable diviners. In the contemporary religious practice, *Orí-Òkè* serves this purpose of the last hope. People run to it when other efforts and powers have failed. In other words, as there exist, *Ifá's* cult, so is *Òkè/ Orí-Òkè* to the cult. This is why Yorùbá do say that "awo nii gbáwo nígbọ̀wọ́…" (One god (awo) assists the other to succeed), without which the god will be disgraced and put to shame. In the *Odù-ifá* above, there exist *awo* "a cult" between *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* and *Òkè/ Orí-Òkè* for the accomplishment of each other's goals and objectives. The *awo* between *Ọ̀rúnmìlà/Ifá* is very spiritual, cordial and unlimited.

It should be noted that *Ifá* recognizes *Òkè* in form of rock as possessing the same supernatural power. The reliability of *Ifá*

divination performed on the *Orí-Òkè* was given prominence more reliable than the one performed elsewhere. This is contained in *Ògbèyẹ̀kú* as recorded in Agboọlá (2012, p. 192) that:

> …*Tití tí lórí Ogbó*
> …*A difá fún Ọ̀rúnmìlà.*
> *Ifá ńṣawo lọ orí àpáta Àngbá ńsálá*
> …The longevity head is eternal
> Performed divination for *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*
> *Ifá* was performing divination work on the mountain rock of *Àngbá ńsálá*

Orí-Òkè as an icon of longevity is shown in the above *Ifá* corpus as in the *EjìOgbè* cited earlier. It is equally demonstrated in the *Ifá* corpus above that *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* gave priority to the divination performed on *Orí-Òkè* on a critical matter and trying periods. The *Ifá* precedence cited above on the sacrifice (symbolized by divination) on *Orì-Òkè* has been well referenced, valued and emulated to the present time among the Yorùbá people.

Some other *Ifá* practitioners also performed their *Ifá* divination on *Orí-Òkè*. Such *Ifá Orí-Òkè* divination is reliable and has long term benefits. According to *Odù Ògúndá kẹtẹ̀* contained in Agboọlá (2012, p. 222):

> …*A difá fún Àjàlá Orí-Òkè*
> *Tí yó máa bọkin rẹ̀ bí ẹni ńṣọdún…*
>
> …Cast divination for *Àjàlá Orí-Òkè*
> that will be performing his divination yearly…

Some yearly *Ifá* divinations are performed on *Orí-Òkè* by *Ifá* practitioners on some special occasions because of the values associated with divination performed on the *Orí-Òkè*.

Another iconic symbol of *Orí-Òkè* or *Okè* is immortality. For instance *Ọ̀yẹ̀kú Méjì* contained in Abímbọ́lá (1968, pp. 25&6) asserts that:

…A díá fún Ọlọ́mọ àwáyéèkú.
Nwọ́n ní ó rúbọ àìkú…
ó ṣe é ikú ò pa á
Ogún ọdún òní o,
Òkè laìkú gbọingbọin,
Gbọingbọin ni tòkè
Òkè, Òkè gbọingbọin.
Igba ọdún òní o
Òkè mbẹ laìkú gbọingbọin;
Gbọingboin ni tòkè,
Òkè, Òkè gbọingbọin,
Ìgbà gbogbo lòkè mbẹ laìkú gbọingbọin,
Gbọingbọin ni tòkè,
Òkè, Òkè gbọingbọin,
Cast divination for *Ọlọ́mọ àwáyéèkú*
He was asked to perform sacrifice for immortality.
He did, he died not
Thirty years' time,
Òkè will forever remain immortal.
Òkè forever immovable
Two hundred years time
Òkè is there immortal
Òkè is forever immovable.
Òkè is forever there immovable, immovable.
Òkè is forever constant
Òkè, Òkè is immovable.

The immovable nature is also contained in *ÈjìOgbè*, Abimbọ́lá (1977b, p. 101):

Mo di digba Oróṣè
Ng ò kú mọ́
Mo digba Òkè,
Mo le gbọin
I become *Igba Oróṣè*
I am no more dying.

I become *Igba Òkè*
I am immovable

The attribute of being ever constant makes people to come to the top so as to be on top of their problems in live. *Òkè* can never be conquered. He is always victorious. Any human being that possesses this attribute is an icon of *Òkè*. Abimbọla 1977b, pp. 141&2) "Òkè ni Ifá ń pe ẹni apá ò ká" (Ifá do call whoever cannot be defeated Òkè). According to *Èjìogbè*:

Ẹni apá ò ká
Ni orúkọ à á pòkè…
Whoever cannot be overcome
is called *Òkè* by name…

The feature of standing erect is observed in the nature of a child called *Òkè*. It is *orúkọ àmúntọ̀runwá* (a celestial name). *Òkè*, as a child must not be bent to be fed like other children in Yorùbá tradition. If this is attempted, there will be convulsion on the child. According to Adeoye (1982, p. 12) "Òkè: Èyí ni orúkọ àmúntọ̀runwa. Ọmọ tí ó bá dákú ńígbàtí a ban mú u l'ágbálẹ̀" (Òkè: This is a name brought from heaven by the child. A child that does has convulsion in an attempt to feed him by bending him). Bending symbolizes a defeat, which will never be associated with *Òkè*. Because of the relationship established between *Orí* and *Òkè*, which brought about their complementary association, the two divinities are icons of immortality. Ọlajide (2012, p. 138) asserts about *Orí* that, "ORÍ, like spirit, is essentially a metaphysical being and it is thus immortal. At death it merely returns to heaven, its primordial source… Orí is also interpreted as a personified concept…" It will be recalled that *Orí* had earlier been explained as one of the divinities that came along with others from heaven. *Orí* and *Òkè* or *Orí-Òkè* are/is an iconic symbol(s) of immortality in Yorùbá (Ifá) religious belief.

Conclusion

Orí-Òkè has been a mountain or hill top (may be of rock) believed to be sacred place because of the presence of the two divinities (Orí-Òkè) in the Yorùbá religious belief. It is a place of "last hope" for peoples' critical problems to be permanently solved. *Orí-Òkè* physical outlook is transformed into spiritual, which people look up to. In other words, the presence of people on *Orí-Òkè* and the presentation of their heart desires are associated with *Orí-Òkè*. Some natural observations are associated with *Orí-Òkè*, which serve as reinforcement on the Yorùbá beliefs on *Ori-Òkè*. For example, despite natural events such as rain or storm, *Orí-Òkè* will ever remain unchanged and unmoved. To this effect, *Orí-Òke* is an icon of longevity, victory and immortality. This makes *Orí-Òkè* to play a very important role in overcoming enemies in periods of war. The Yorùbá people, most of the time, lives near where *Orí-Òkè* is/are, so as to have a place of shield or defence and protection. For instance, after the people of Ìbàdàn were dislodged from their initial place of settlement. They thought of settlement in another place that will offer them natural defence and protection by the presence of *Òkè*. According to Falọla (1984, p. 20):

> This was why they settled at Òkè Màpó (Màpó Hill) and clustered around its brow. Thus Ìbàdàn was referred to as 'Ìlú orí òkè"-'the city on the hill.' Apparently, the site was regarded as impenetrable to the Fulani and to the other hostile neighbours. The belief among the earliest settlers was that it was easier for an army to conquer settlements built on open grasslands without hills…Most of the refugees in the nineteenth century were compelled by hostile, superior military powers to seek places with hilly topography in order to 'strengthen their military weakness.' In the case of Ìbàdàn, Mapo hill provided a great deal of security: 'the crest (that is, of the hill) was ideal as a spot from which the surroundings could be watched, and the base, generally girdled with a thicker forest, served for protection.

This physical defence and security is transformed into spiritual reinforcement and enforcement by the Yorùbá people. Climbing to top makes one to see the surrounding, without any hiding place for the enemies makes *Orí-Òkè* to be ever valued and preferable. The iconic symbol of *Orí-Òkè* is regarded by the Yorùbá as having and giving them lasting hope, peace and security (physically and spiritually) in their life.

The recognition of *Òkè* as a divinity is demonstrated by the fact that some of *Òkè* are worshiped like any other gods among the Yorùbá people till date. "An example of a hill which is locally worshipped is Òkè Ìbàdàn (literally, the Ìbàdàn hill) which is still worshipped every year in the most populous town in black Africa. On the day set apart for its annual worship, no fire must appear in any hearth" (Fádipẹ̀ 1970, p. 261).

The use of *Òkè* or *Orí Òkè* as a point of religious or spiritual contact with the Supreme Being: *Olódùmarè*, evolves as a result of "Africans belief system" of practicing Christianity or Islam. This opinion is equally expressed by Harris (1972, p. 205) that:

> …from about the last decade of the nineteenth century, some mission trained Africans began to demand greater religious responsibilities for themselves, a greater respects for African culture (music, dance, language, beliefs, customs) and racial equality. These concerns lunched the independent church movements which objective was to develop separate African churches that would be Christian while identifying with African cultural and physical needs.

Orí Òkè (mountain or hill or rock prayer) arises as a result of the Yorùbá beliefs towards *Orí Òkè* or *Òkè* symbolism; in which, when embedded into the Christianity or Islamic religious practice among the Yorùbá people of Nigeria, is a better unique way of their faith.

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Chapter 30

The Economic Benefits of *Ori-Oke* and Tourist Centres in Ondo State

Ojetayo Gabriel Kehinde

Abstract

Conservation and preservation of sacred spots have never been undermined by governmental policies since the last two decades, though physically, not adequately catered for. This failure is a result of the unnecessary attitude of the government to implement basic policies. The same can be said of Prayer Mountain where people of all kinds throng to offer prayer for some existential problems of life without adequate care for this contestation of space. In Odo state, where this paper is based, Prayer Mountain has not received government attention over the years. This paper, therefore, adopts historical and empirical methods. The paper, therefore, advocates that much attention should be given to these sacred places by the government, so as to preserve and promote African relics and values. To this end, the government at all tiers should ensure development in roeder to compete with best tourist sites in the world.

Introduction

Tourism potentials abound in the country in great magnitude. As documented by Awaritefe (1993), there are about 109 places or site of interests in Nigeria. Although since then more areas of tourist attractions must have been discovered, Nigeria is a country with diverse geographical attributes, with a rich heritage spectacular scenic natural and cultural landscape. Nigeria is a country with diverse locational attributes. The Atlantic Ocean provides excellent beaches. There are many rivers in the hinterland, so also are there abundant wildlife resources in the tropical grassland and forest vegetation. These, together with numerous inselbergs and extrusive volcanic landforms in some parts of the country alongside other features such

as waterfalls, springs, rivers, creeks and lagoons located around the coastal areas, offer abundant potential opportunities for domestic tourism. If these geographic tourism resources are adequately and properly harnessed, Nigeria no doubt, will occupy a position among the frontline nations in tourism development.

In addition, Nigeria stands at an advantageous position when the population factor is considered in tourism development. This is particularly an asset in domestic tourism. According to Bhattia (2006), the significance of tourism industry in the development of the economic base of any nation is indisputable. However, tourism in Nigeria has not been given the seriousness it deserves. This is as a result of some factors affecting the development of tourism industry. Some of the factors include the lack of required modem infrastructural facilities (Bankole, 2010). Secondly there is in some parts of the country acute conditions of underdevelopment and poverty are evident which many Nigeria bound tourist may not like to be confronted with (www.onlineNigeria.com/ travel, index, asp).

The rising profile of the tourism industry in Nigeria is welcome development. This is traceable to the efforts of the government aimed at giving the industry a new lease of life through the economic liberalization policies. The increasing trend in international tourist arrivals to country constitutes great asset concerning tourism development in Nigeria. However, the euphoria accompanying the increasing trend of international tourist arrivals to the country may be short-lived or punctured as a result of security challenges prevailing in the country. Insecurity can drastically affect the popularity of destinations and is something that raises a great deal of public interest when it becomes public issues for instance, Florida, at a point in time, had considerable bad publicity following increases in robbery on new arrivals to the destination. Equally Italy and Russia have problems with organized crime, which also deters visitors.

Nigeria is challenged as never before in providing for the security of her citizens. It should be emphasized that the trend of violence across the length and breadth of the nation has assumed a disturbing dimension. Indeed, Nigeria is ranked among the countries of the world where the state of peace is very low {TELL, 2012). According

to the 2012 Global Peace Index, released by the Institute of Economics and Peace, an International Research Institute that measures the level of global peace, the country is ranked 146th and is one of the 32 countries marked with red. Also in the red category are Sudan, 156th Afghanistan, 157th and Somalia 158th. In 2011, Nigeria's position was 142nd, a better performance. At the bottom of the ladder of 153 countries in the 2011 index were Sudan, Iraq and Somalia which are ranked 151st 152nd and 153rd respectively. Five years ago, in 2007 when the ranking started, Nigeria was 117th, 29 points higher than this year's performance. This scenario reveals a parlous state of peace in the country. From the look of things Nigeria is gradually sliding a state of anarchy. The increase in the spate of criminalities across the country is antithetical to national development in its entire ramification. Tourism industry not an exception. Embarking 011 tourism makes meaning to the tourists only when they are secured. Given the state of security in Nigeria, much is left to be desired. Nigeria is bedevilled with increasing number of security problems. Amongst are: ethnic militias, kidnapping robbery, ritual killings, and lately Boko Haram debacle or insurgence. Ethnic violence increased sharply as militant ethnic and nationalist minded militias emerged in different parts of the country and started operating within their domains. Examples of such groupings are the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), in the South-west; the Egbesu Boys in the Niger Delta; the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra MASSOB), and Bakassi Boys in the South-east; and the Arewa People's Congress (APC) in the North. The regional spread of ethnic militias portends dangers for the survival and security of the country. The spread of ethnic militias across the nation print a picture of a nation under siege.

Tourism as an Important Sector of Economic Development

Adora (2010) asserts that tourism has become an important sector that has an impact on development of country economy. The main benefits of tourism are income creation and generation of jobs. For many regions and countries it is the most important source of

welfare. The ability of the national economy to benefit from tourism depends on the availability of investment to develop the necessary infrastructure and on its ability to supply the needs of tourists. Nigeria has a touristic potential for development of mountain tourism and other alternative forms of tourism.

Godfrey and Clarke (2000) are of the view that tourism allows wealth to be injected into a community in a variety of ways. The great benefit of this industry is that it's extremely labour intensive, and many of the businesses that operate within it are only small businesses and micro operators. This means that every money or penny coming into the industry is felt quickly by business owners and staff, and is directly related to a boost in local spending. For a community with the potential to become a tourist destination, there are a huge range of benefits. It's also great for individual travellers, because with a booming tourism industry there is a lot to do, plenty of places to stay, and as a result more and more tourists are drawn in.

Advantages of Tourism

Employment

One of the easiest advantages to identify is the jobs tourism brings. This ranges from directly influenced positions like tour guides, hotel staff, coach services, and restaurants. What's great about all these businesses is that they not only pay wages to their staff, but source goods and products locally, giving a boost to local industry. What's great about tourism is that the supporting industries like retail and food production also benefit, although it is not as obvious to the untrained eye as this is mostly occurring behind the scenes.

Increased Spending in the Local Community

This comes twofold. First you have the money that is spent directly by tourists in the economy. Not just on tourism, but there are a huge range of basic human requirements that need to be purchased, like food, clothing, hairdressing, medical services, and

transportation needs that all need to be filled, along with souvenirs and amusements. In its own way, tourism supports global trade, which you can learn more about in this course on the new economy.

In addition to what is spent by tourists, the tourism money that is earned, by both businesses and individuals is often re-injected into the local economy. So you've got more money being earned locally thanks to tourism, which is then spent in the local economy as well. This is why tourism revenues are often referred to as having a multiplier effect, because a large percentage of every tourist money earned is reintroduced back into the economy, again and again. This is the multiplier effect. Ultimately, the more tourist money coming in, the larger the economic benefit for everyone.

Diversification

In addition to bringing prosperity to an economy, it also allows an economy to develop a new form of income. This acts as an insurance policy in case of hard times, because the additional money coming in can help support traditional industries in case they come under financial pressure. This is especially important for communities that rely on a single industry, or where there is a concentration of industry that is environmentally damaging such as mining or manufacturing. It's also important for rural communities, where there is significant risk based on the farming conditions and global commodity prices. Tourism allows a community to diversify their sources of income, and rely less on a single industry.

Infrastructure

The additional revenue that comes into a community also benefits the local council or governments. It means more tax money, which allows public projects to be launched or developed. This means the infrastructure improves, with new roads being built, parks developed and public spaces improved. The better facilities brings in more visitors, but is a fantastic benefit to local residents, especially when there is enough revenue to build new airports, schools and hospitals, which all support the economic development even further. Without a good infrastructure, the flow of goods and

services is impossible, and tourism revenues allow this to be supported.

Social advantages

In addition to the revenue, there are also fantastic cultural advantages to tourism. It can be a source of pride for local communities, and allows them to look at their history, and cultural heritage and develop their own community identity. This helps the local residents to maintain their traditions and culture, while also showcasing it for all the visitors. This advantage of tourism is what has saved many local heritage sites from destruction, in addition to giving tourists a wonderful insight into the local ways of life. Tourism can help to preserve the history of a region that may be at risk of being lost.

Environmental Advantages

Many tourism operators are differentiating themselves from their counterparts by offering tours and packages with an environmental twist, and supporting the conservation of the local area. This helps both the environment in dealing with the influx of tourists, but also helps to build a strong reputation for the tourism operator. As a traveller, remember to respect the places you visit, and always leave them as you found it.

Opportunities

Bringing tourists into a community gives it new life, and creates opportunities for entrepreneurs to establish new services and products, or facilities that would not be sustainable based on the local population of residents alone. Tourists are all potential customers, and with the right approach can be targeted in a business strategy that allows for fantastic success.

There's no doubt tourism is fantastic for a local community. The key to remember when tourist are traveling is to be a sustainable tourist, they should always act to support the cultural diversity of the place they are visiting, and make sure they take part in activities that add value to the local community. They should not

do anything that deteriorates the environment, and support the local and community owned establishments that form the heart of the local tourism industry.

Tourist Attraction

Let's take South Africa as an example. Without attractions, there would be no tourism to South Africa. So the only reason tourists come in because of its beauty and the many tourist attractions showcasing that beauty. Godfrey and Clarke (2000) are of the opinion that tourist attractions are not only manmade structures or activities. Let's define tourist attractions as anything that attracts tourists, but requires some form of investment by the government or private sector in order to allow tourists, but requires some form of investment by the government or private sector in order to allow tourists to visit the attraction. This includes natural features or destinations that are popular with tourists, such as mountains, beaches, wildlife areas. By investing in infrastructure like roads to allow access and nearby accommodation, these places of natural beauty can become accessible tourist attractions. Without the investment, they would not be visited.

In South Africa, officially about 11% of the country's economy is directly generated by the tourism industry, and one in 9 people are directly dependent on tourism for their livelihoods. But that's not the full story. The indirect contribution to the economy is much more than that. The automotive industry, for example, is seen as a separate industry but would suffer a major blow without tourism. A significant percentage of auxiliary industries and services supply the tourism industry and are greatly boosted by a healthy tourism industry. Think of industries like the property market, the automotive industry, the catering and food industry. Every single accommodation provider, from the largest hotel or resort to the smallest guesthouse or bed-and-breakfast, needs to buy food, beds, linen, fuel for their vehicles, etc. When they start out or are refurbished they need wood, carpets, furniture, curtains, art for the walls, plants for the garden, paint supplies, tiles, and so on. To function normally, the industry employs plumbers, electricians, car mechanics, chefs, waiters, lawyers, financial

managers, security guards, all kinds of people whose jobs and economic activity technically form part of industries other than tourism, but it's all part of tourism.

Therefore the overall impact of tourism is much more than 11% of the country's economy. This is why governments around the world put such a high priority on tourism development, and infrastructure that allows tourism to flourish. Tourist attractions are among a country's most valuable assets, more valuable than gold or diamonds. Without tourist attractions, the economy would collapse.

Businesses and public organizations are increasingly interested in the economic impacts of tourism at national, state, and local levels. One regularly hears claims that tourism supports jobs in an area or that a festival or special event generated Y million dollars in sales or income in a community. "Multiplier effects" are often cited to capture secondary effects of tourism spending and show the wide range of sectors in a community that may benefit from tourism.

Tourism's economic benefits are touted by the industry for a variety of reasons. Claims of tourism's economic significance give the industry greater respect among the business community, public officials, and the public in general. This often translates into decisions or public policies that are favourable to tourism. Community support is important for tourism, as it is an activity that affects the entire community. Tourism businesses depend extensively on each other as well as on other businesses, government and residents of the local community.

Economic benefits and costs of tourism reach virtually everyone in the region in one way or another. Economic impact analyses provide tangible estimates of these economic interdependencies and a better understanding of the role and importance of tourism in a region's economy.

George and Mair (2009) opine that tourism activity also involves economic costs, including the direct costs incurred by tourism businesses, government costs for infrastructure to better serve tourists, as well as congestion and related costs borne by individuals in the community. Community decisions over tourism often involve debates between industry proponents touting tourism's economic

impacts (benefits) and detractors emphasizing tourism's costs. Sound decisions rest on a balanced and objective assessment of both benefits and costs and an understanding of who benefits from tourism and who pays for it.

Tourism's economic impacts are therefore an important consideration in state, regional and community planning and economic development. Economic impacts are also important factors in marketing and management decisions. Communities therefore need to understand the relative importance of tourism to their region, including tourism's contribution to economic activity in the area.

A variety of methods, ranging from pure guesswork to complex mathematical models, are used to estimate tourism's economic impacts (Lucky 2001: 15). Studies vary extensively in quality and accuracy, as well as which aspects of tourism are included. Technical reports often are filled with economic terms and methods that non-economists do not understand. On the other hand, media coverage of these studies tend to oversimplify and frequently misinterpret the results, leaving decision makers and the general public with a sometimes distorted and incomplete understanding of tourism's economic effects. How can the average person understand these studies sufficiently to separate good studies from bad ones and make informed choices? The purpose of this paper is to present a systematic introduction to economic impact concepts and methods. The presentation is written for tourism industry analysts and public officials, who would like to better understand, evaluate, or possibly conduct an economic impact assessment. The bulletin is organized around ten basic questions that either are asked or should be asked about the economic impacts of tourism in Nigeria.

Nigeria as a country has quite a rich and diverse cultural heritage that has received the desired attention. There are beautiful world heritage sites in Nigeria, which include the Osun Osogbo groove, the Evil Forest in Taraba, and major events that are becoming popular in the country's culture calendar such as Lagos Carnival, Abuja Carnival, Carnival Calabar, Osun Osogbo Festival, Argungu Fishing Festival, Nwoyo Fishing Festival, Ofala Festival, Obanta Festival,

Twins Festivals, Olojo and many other tourist attractions that people don't know about.

Over the years, experts have noted that the reason the country has not been able to exploit its tourism potential is because there is no harmony between the two sectors. Both have worked at cross-purposes. Even while still in their own ministry, the non-synchronization of programmes was noticeable. Yet a well-harmonized culture and tourism sector is a sure bet to boost the country's revenue.

Tourism Master Plan and Cultural Policy are the two pivotal instruments by which this harmonization could be built, but the plan has not been implemented by the federal government.

With culture and tourist centres, Nigeria stands a great chance of surviving the current economic depression ravaging the entire globe if it could focus more on tourism, adding that the country's diverse tourist centres are capable of engaging the youths in productive endeavours. This realization has continued to turn the world's attention to issues of conservation of tourist centres, increasing preservation and rehabilitation of monuments, archaeological sites museums and mountains to mention but a few.

Hanna (2006) argued that to achieve the objective of making tourism centre of economic activity, Federal Government has to work hard to put in place a better and enabling environment for all players in the tourism sector through the review of policies and support structures — Government needs to commission studies to evaluate the direct and indirect impacts of the cultural fiestas and carnival on the economy as well as providing data for planners. It equally needs to use the event to market itself nationally and internationally as a tourist and business friendly location for meetings and conventions. While a few states had gone far in translating their tourism potentials into viable economic tools, the Federal Government was yet to wake up to this economic reality.

There is no doubt that culture and tourism have remained a source of economic and huge revenue derivation in some countries of the world, especially within the African continent with South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Egypt, Ethiopia to mention a few taking the

lead. Tourism is a foreign exchange earner for many countries, and that it was time Nigeria too joined them with the rich tourist centres at her disposal, which has lain largely untapped. The summit is needed for strategic thinking to evaluate the economic benefits of hosting events in the country with poor capacity to generate return in terms of every naira spent. At the 2015 World Tourism Day event held in Enugu State, Director General, Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC), Mrs. Sally Mbanefo, underscored the role of tourism sector as a valuable and sustainable source of livelihood for millions of people.

She described tourism as the greatest employer of labour, adding, "Nigeria has a better advantage over so many other countries to benefit from tourism. We have the advantage of population. Tourism contributes 10 per cent to the global GDP but as at now, Nigeria is not fully benefiting from tourism like other countries. For instance, 4,333,000 tourists visited Nigeria in 2013, which contributed about 4 per cent to our GDP, while tourism contributes 17.7 per cent to the GDP of Gambia; 13 per cent to Egypt; 12 per cent to Kenya; 11.9 per cent to Mexico; 9 per cent to South Africa, and 6 per cent to Cuba. We need to know that Nigeria should focus more on tourism as the best alternative to oil, with domestic tourism as the catalyst."

There are so many contending issues in the tourism sector, paramount of which is the tourism master plan. When the tourism master plan was inaugurated, in 2008, by the former minister of tourism, culture and national orientation, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode, the aim was to launch the sector as a viable economic alternative to oil as well as market Nigeria's tourism assets both at the local and international level. Eight years down the line, it appears that achieving this project has become a herculean task with scanty activities thriving in the sector. Experts have pointed at the need to develop domestic tourism, as it has the potential of improving the tourism value chain, which include job creation, poverty alleviation and revenue generation.

The Importance of Ori-Oke (Mountains and Hills)

The most population country in Africa, Nigeria has become an untapped tourist paradise with long stretches of exotic beaches, lush mountains, well preserved tradition and culture and enchanting tourist attractions. For the spiritual shines to the ancient cities of the north, from the river deltas to the Yoruba kingdoms, the Ibo's stunning environments and among many simply pure sceneries.

One of the characteristics of the Aladura churches in Yorubaland is a visit to sacred sites or location of churches on mountains or hills. Most of the Christ Apostolic church branches are to have a prefix "Oke" before the name of the church of the Lord (Aladura) performs the annual Ori Oke (mount Taborah) festival.

According to Omoyajowo, the hill top is regarded as a sacred place in cherubim and seraphim "To be at a sacred place… means to participate in life external; it is the place where an imperishable life force has been available. The members of the church are encouraged to go to hill or mountain tops for prayers, because the place is the point of contact with God or with infinite power, the place itself takes the quality of holiness or sacredness.

Edward Smith was quoted by Omoyajowo thus mountains themselves are frequently taken to be living place of God". He went further to say, "they go out to hills in holy weeks and at all hallows to fast and pray. The history of African communities is intricately associated with some natural formations, such as hills, mountains, rivers and lakes. Such formations are so revered that in certain cases they may be deified and celebrated on an annual basis to honour them. Examples are the Oke Ibadan, Oke Idanre, Oke Igbeti, Osun Osogbo and so on.

There are spiritual blessings when prayers are made on such mountains. Women that suffer from infertility received answers to their prayers on mountains, such children received are named after mountains like Okebunmi, Okedare, and so on. Mountains and hills are found useful and regarded as sacred phenomena in Christian and African Traditional Religion. There are a lot of mountains and hills

in Nigeria that are good to serve as tourist centres if Nigeria government could spend money to transform their site.

Since adherents of the religions that we have in Nigeria do go to mountains to pray, commercial activities usually occurred. There are a lot of buying and selling there. For example, selling of consumable items like bread, biscuits, soft drinks, water, fruits. Non–consumable materials are also sold, items like handkerchiefs, shoe polish, soap, and anointing oil and so on. Ondo State Government should give more attention to Idanre mountain and other tourist centres other to boost economic and social wellbeing of the people of the in the state

Nigerians should be able to pass a message that tourism is a very serious business in the country — that there are many things quite good and tangible happening here that needed to be talked about, paramount of which is that Nigerians are warm and positive people. The burgeoning middle class in emerging markets, including African countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Nigeria and Kenya, presents huge opportunities for the local leisure and business tourism industries.

The collaboration between the private and public sector and the marketing council's continued work in forging mutually beneficial relationships with other national departments, to ensure that the interests of tourism, its growth and contribution to the GDP remain a key focus on the national agenda.

The NTDC should do more in the area of business tourism — that is tourism generated as a result of meetings, incentive trips, conferences and exhibitions. Globally, this sector generates in excess of 36 million trips. Now is the time to collaborate with International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) to increase the number of events, conferences and meetings held in the destinations, whether city, state or country.

It should, in league with different state tourism boards and private sector, also seek out modalities to appropriately market Nigeria's tourism facilities. Apart from historical events that could be marketed, there are various festivals that the outside would need to know. And the best way is not by taking a pavilion at some

trade/travel show or markets or taking a few journalists from the country and numerous staff of NTDC to such events.

Concluding remarks tourism, as a world-wide phenomenon, touches the highest and deepest aspirations of all people and it is also an important element of socio-economic and political development in many countries. Governments, other public authorities, public and private decision-makers whose activities are related to tourism, and tourists themselves, consider it a priority to protect and reinforce the human dignity of both local community and tourists. Because of this all these agents have registered a growing concern in sustainability as a guiding principle to allow the integration of economic development with environmental and social aspects within tourism policy and strategy. But the incorporation of sustainability in tourism development is not a self-evident issue but a politically contested one, if the different interpretations of the concept which have been identified are taken into account. These differing, sometimes conflicting, interpretations are not accidental, but rather the outcome of particular ideologies, varied disciplinary backgrounds, value systems and vested interests. Despite the wide range of varying definitions, at its core tourism sustainability lies : strong emphasis to three simple concerns: firstly the need to avoid the uncontrolled destructive degradation of the environment and the loss of local identity, while respecting the fragile balance that characterizes many tourist destinations, in particular environmentally sensitive areas; the need to actively pursue and strengthen the quality of life and equity between present generations; secondly the exigency not to reduce the opportunities offered to future generations. If the core elements of tourism sustainability - ecology, economy, and equity - are to be taken into consideration for balanced strategies, there are many gaps in our knowledge that need to be filled if we are to be successful in controlling tourism in a way that puts this important economic sector onto a sustainable development path. Several analyses have emphasized this point. Nevertheless, there are no definitive answers, particularly in the field of fairness and distributional justice of tourism options. This paper has identified issues for future consideration, especially in view of making tourism become

compatible with the conservation of major ecosystems and with the preservation and good use of historical-cultural heritage.

Conclusion

A discussion on the environment especially on tourist centres has been a national and global event in the recent time, so as to achieve socio economic development in the country. I believe that proper attention should be giving to tourist centres especially the mountains. Mountains and hills are found useful and regarded as sacred phenomena in every religion. Christians, Muslims and the adherents of traditional religion are making adequate use of it to achieve their religious satisfaction.

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Chapter 31

An Appraisal of Prayer Mountain Syndrome in Nigeria and its Effects on Christians

Ayoola, Adediran Amos

Abstract

African holds in high esteem all of the creatures of God, both animate and inanimate. Everything, no matter how little, everyone no matter how seemingly insignificant, has its importance in the order of the created world. Natural phenomenon like rivers, mountains, cave and a host of others often receive attention and interest of people in seeking the face of God with the ultimate aim of receiving blessings from Him. Apparently, the custodians of those aforementioned places often over-ride their adherents by using the existing problems to exploit them thereby compounding the problems. Men often bath for women in some rivers, when some people supposed to engage in the lucrative business one sees them on the mountain early in the morning. In this work, historical method of gathering data, coupled with the Interpretative Research Method were germane to this work. However, it was observed that many innocent lives have been ruined in the process of attending one mountain or the other. Many wives have been snatched from their husbands in the process or means of solving problem. It was recommended that religious leaders should not say God has said when they have not received from Him.

Introduction

Prayer is very important to a Christian. It is a means of communicating with God. To buttress the above assertion; they often say that a prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. Prayer has been the moving force in the lives of God's people in the Bible. It is important to note that in contemporary times and in this part of the world, prayer has been an important force that brings people together irrespective of age, gender, race or discipline, especially corporate prayers. It allows each one to pour out what is in his heart

to God. Indeed prayer can be said by individual, a fellowship, a church and group of churches.

Important personalities in the Old and New Testament prayed and received answers to their prayers. The Church of the apostolic age was known for her indefatigable and answered prayer life. They were not usually moved by any situation or circumstances, anytime that challenge came; they always took solace in the Lord's injunction. "Ask and it shall be given unto you" instead of allowing their problem to overwhelm them their regular prayer often paved way for them.

It is apparent that the word Jesus did not mention a specific place of prayer. In a typical African or Yoruba context, mountain and hills are saved places where shrines of gods and deities were located at the same time where prayers and sacrifices were offered (Olayiwola 1987). The adherents of African independent Churches make use of some hills and mountains as places of worship or saying solitary or corporate prayer. These places, which are usually far removed from the hustle and bustle of life, are observed as saved places Ogbu (2005). Permanent structures or huts have been built on some of these hills with resident pastors, prophets or prophetesses living there to assist those who come for prayer. However, it is not an overstatement to say that cultural influence on people's approach to Prayer Mountain has made them to lose focus. This has led to deviations from Biblical standard of prayer which culminated to using of human intellect or self-will to solve problems.

The objectives of this work are: to examine the Biblical example of what supposed to take place on the Prayer Mountain; discuss the prevailing situation in the contemporary Prayer Mountain, provide solutions to some of the challenges facing mountain prayer ministries.

What is Religion?

Idowu (1977) opined that African is religious in everything. Huxley also corroborated the position on which Idowu stands that "a typical African Man is a religious man if religion is taken from the life of the people a vacuum is created that cannot be filled by any

other substitute". It is obvious that religion is one of the features of human life and that man cannot do away from religion in the society. Therefore religion cannot be dodged by the people. It is a known fact that religion has no acceptable definition; rather it depends on how individual views it.

However, it is pertinent to examine some definitions of religion. The word religion is coined out from the Latin word "religio". The common verbs are "religere" ("to turn to constantly") or "to observe conscientiously", "religaria" ("to bind oneself back") and "religere" ("to choose again"). It is not an exaggeration to say that most common definitions of religion appear to be etymological derivatives of the above verbs. To corroborate this, Peel (1969) defined religion as "the whole complexus of attitudes, conviction and institutions through which we express our deep fundamental relationship with reality and not excluding the created order". Looking at it from another angle, Gifford (1998) opined that religion "describes any system of values, norms and related symbols and rituals, arising from attempt by individuals and social groups to effect certain ends, whether in this world or in the future world by means wholly or partly supernatural. The transcendental perspective of religion is aptly captured in the definition of Odumuyiwa (2007). He defined religion as "man's effective desire to be in right relationship with a sacred transcendental order, controlling human destiny and events, either a prescribed system of rituals and of belief". Oshun (2002) defined religion "as essentially a relationship, a link established by the human person and the divine person believed to exist". According to Kant, "religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands".

From the above definitions, it is obvious that religion conveys the characteristics of a supernatural being, a feeling of awe and mystery in response to the command of that supernatural being. This dimension may have been responsible for the emotional power that religion sometimes have on the adherents. This is exemplified in the actions of some religious adherents who often feel that they are carrying out all activities "for" god, whereas these activities are "against" God. They maim, kill, destroy and loot "for god". Suffice it to say that these activities are against the society and the people,

proximately, but against God, ultimately. No doubt, religion, which is operationally defined as "belief in the supernatural" is said to have a profound impact on almost all societies. This could be in the aspect of politics, law, education, culture, behaviour and a host of others.

Prayer Mountains in the Old Testament

Mountains have an important place in the symbolic geography of religious traditions all over the world, although the ways in which mountains are significant have differed. Some have been seen as cosmic mountains central to an entire worldview; others have been distinguished as places, or even geographical manifestation of the divine, Oshitelu (2007). The cosmic mountains are sacred centres. As the centre of the world, linking heaven and earth and anchoring the cardinal directions, the centre of the world, it is a cosmic mountain, central to the order and stability of the cosmos. For the Hebrews, God's dwelling place was surely not Sinai, the place of revelation, but Mount Zion, the sturdy, Rocky Mount of Jerusalem. Zion, neither lofty nor dramatic, was the firm foundation of Jerusalem, the city on a hill. Here God was to dwell in the midst of the people. The awesome mountain replaced with the security and protection of Fortress Mountain.

Moses has had many experiences about mountain in hearing God Speak to him. On one of such occasion was when he went to the mountain to receive the "Decalogue" but on descending, it was another story of the "Golden calf" which Aaron made and the people of Israel worshiped. All this while, Moses had ascended to the mountain he did not pray. On the sixth time of his experience on the mountain he prayed. "Moses ascended the mountain again" (Exodus 32: 30-33). There, he continued to intercede asking Yahweh to forgive the people. Moses was not looking for a cheap prayer and without violating his own standards of holiness, pointed Moses and the people forward to the Promised Land. The great episode of Mount Carmel I Kings 17-19 where fire came down from heaven was another occasion recorded in the Old Testament event of Prayer Mountain.

The warring deities and their prophets fought the decisive battle at Mount Carmel (I Kings 18). Once again, as if his divine opponent, Yahweh fired the first shot by announcing through Elijah that he would soon send rain. Elijah, Yahweh's representative, dramatically confronted Baal's 450 Prophet (vs 20-40). Boldly, Elijah called Israel to worship Yahweh or Baal, depending on which god would send fire on the prepared sacrifice. But when a full morning of shouting and ritual dancing produced nothing from Baal Elijah, endlessly frenzied his opponents with hilarious sarcasm "shout louder" surely he is a god; perhaps he is deep in thought, busy or travelling, maybe he is sleeping". When Elijah's turn came, he moved with a striking simplicity. His prayer was short, direct and devoid of frantic that this people will know that you are Lord, God (v 37). Immediately, fire fell from heaven consuming, his sacrifice, and the altar itself (v 38) the two accounts show clearly that there are Prayer Mountains where result oriented prayers took place in the Old Testament.

Prayer Mountain in the New Testament

There is no doubt about the fact that mountains appear, at important juncture in Jesus ministry. Matthew's Gospel has a sequence of six mountains; temptation (4: 8, 10) (5: 1-8); Reading (15: 29-31): Transfiguration (17: 1-9); Olivet discourse (2425); Power and commissioning (28: 16-20). In Matthew 14: 22-23, the account of Jesus dismissing the crowd and sending off His disciples to the side and most important, His willingness to go to the mountain side by Himself to pray. From this account, we see that Jesus finished the task of sending the people away, and then went up into the mountain to pray. After the big day with the crowd Jesus turned to His fattier in prayer. This was done privately. Matthew has two expressions "by himself and alone" so that he is emphasizing that what took place was between Jesus and His father only.

It is obvious that, the frequent occurrence of the use of mountain in Jesus ministry is a symbol of Jesus' acceptance of Prayer Mountain Peel (1969). It is pertinent to say that at the transfiguration mountain, Jesus and his disciple had a corporate prayer and in Matthew 14: 22-

23 he was on the mountain purposely to pray. Though, the Bible is silent on His prayer points, mere looking back at the day's prayer, thanksgiving and supplication for renewal of strength will be his focus.

Prayer in contemporary time in the Churches in Nigeria versus Prayer Mountain in African Independent Churches

Most of the early churches sprang up after the reformation of Martin Luther. The word universal in the Roman Catholic Church means 'Universal' What is most directly opposed to Catholicism, therefore, it is not Protestantism (which in any case, has many catholic elements within it) with this ascertained, it is therefore pertinent in this Anglicanism popularly called the church of England and the Baptist church. Anglicanism is bound by common liturgy that is in various recessions of the book of common prayers and is based on either the Elizabeth version of 1559 or that of the prayer book which is prescribed to all Anglican churches. The Bible and hymnal book, provides everything needed for the churches rites and ceremonies. The prayer book has been in continuous use since sixteenth century except for the years of English common wealth (1645-1660) when it was prescribed for public and private use. It is the only vernacular liturgy of the reformation period still in use. The prayer book formula, among them derived from the ancient church, are the principal source of doctrine and a primary basis for the spiritual of both the clergy and the laity.

Baptist denomination as an orthodox church cherishes her heritage. However, when it comes to the issue of prayer, the Baptist cannot be one hundred percent orthodox. What Bowen started in 1854 like a small mustard seed has grown into a gigantic oak tree. Prayer is believed by the contemporary churches to mean a communion and fellowship with God through which a Christian listens and talks to God. Prayer is an act of worship which involving adoration, thanksgiving, confession of sin, intercession and petition. Prayer is a welcome privilege to keep in time with God and claim His promises by coming boldly in faith to the throne of grace.

In the Baptist setting, there is no specific pattern of prayer, the worshippers equally have no particular posture. Prayers in contemporary churches are often interjected in the order of service at the beginning, in the middle and at end. An average Baptist congregation will not allow someone to pray in tongue if he/she cannot interpret, or someone is available to interpret.

Prayer Mountain in African Independent Churches

In order to aid spiritual exercises the African independent churches developed preference for the use of what they have termed as *"Ile Mimo"* or *"Ori Oke"* (sacred places) which they use for the purpose of prayer or as a sort of spiritual retreat. It is believed that prayers when offered in these sacred places are always very efficacious. Consequently, they use these sacred places as a sort of prayer closets. Occasionally, especially during their festivals some of these churches perform ceremonious act of "gigun ori oke" (ascending of sacred hills and mountains) agbala (vineyard) and river side resort are numerous around Yorubaland and their epithets betray their importance. These include, agbala iwosan (vineyard of healing), agbala iyanu (vineyard of miracles), agbala idande (vineyard of deliverance).

As a corollary, it is pertinent to say that the practice of visiting sacred mountains by the independent churches constitutes a major factor of deliverance and conversion for these churches. Usually, the general atmosphere in these sacred places particularly on the mountains gives psychological and tension relief to worried soul as they climb different aforementioned mountains.

The Consequences of Prayer Mountain in African Independent Churches

The general opinion of the people is that mountain is a consecrated place where they can go alone or corporately to pray to God and receive answers to their prayers. Mountain prayer helps people to have more faith in Christ Jesus because there are many

people who come back rejoicing from the mountain because of what God has done for them. Christians and non-Christians testifying to God's power in their lives. Mountain prayer draws people of diverse faith closer to their God.

Moreover, Prayer Mountain affords full concentration. Disturbances are not there compare with the home prayer. People of like mind are always on the mountain to seek the face of God. Mountain prayer often leads to ecumenical movement thereby promoting Christian unity. Different denominations come there to pray, there is no room for decimation on the mountain. The services on the mountain allow good relationship among Christians and even non-Christians.

In addition, it prepares some Christians for the ministry. On the mountain some people were chosen to lead prayer and this has helped them to discover their talents and gifts through that they become servants of God. Prayer Mountain provides avenue for self-discipline. Discipline is one of the features necessary of a Christian. When one visits the mountain, at times it requires that one abstains from sex for a while. Fasting is one of the disciplines that one subjects oneself to while on the mountain. Moreover, it helps to arrest the attention of Christians who may not have time for church service all the time. Many people in the contemporary time are so busy and if such mountain is available, they can go there to worship even if such free time does not fall on Sunday or other hour of service in their church. For example, some business and company executive officers often come to the mountain for all night prayer.

According to Ojo Oloyede in an interview, economically, Prayer Mountain serves as a source of living for many people who make their ends meet. From the main road to the mountain, Okada riders ply the mountain, food vendors are also there meeting people's need in terms of food. School children are also found on the road to the mountain hawking sachet-water, soft drinks etc. just to make ends meet. Therefore, Prayer Mountain serves as an index of economic development in a particular area.

Exploitations on the Prayer Mountain

The general opinion is that mountain is a place where God exercises His supernatural power. The reason is that nobody has a readymade answer as to how the mountain was built. Apparently, people believed that God does not depart from mountains just as the Israelites had the believed that God is always present at the temple of Jerusalem. The question that comes to mind is that "does the founders of churches or congregations on the mountain often received divine calling from God"? The simple answer to the aforementioned question is yes/no. The Bible says by their fruits you shall know them. Therefore, the kind of attitude exhibits by the founder and the effect of that attitude on the members and the society at large will voice out whether the founder receives the call or not.

The Economic recession of Nigeria has prompted some church planters to move from open land to the mountain because of enthusiasm that both Christians and non-Christians show to the mountain. On the mountain some havoc are perpetrated under the umbrella of religion. Examples cited below will confirm the above submission.

Extortions of various forms are the term of the day in some Prayer Mountains. Some leaders will ask members to donate the highest denomination of currency in their pockets for God or asking members on the mountain to empty their pocket that before they reach home miracle of provision will be experienced. This may not be so in some instances; because the faith of the doers may not be in capacity to cope with such calling.

Moreover, families have been disintegrated as a result of "Abe Abo" syndrome. A woman will be on the mountain for days in the absence of the husband. A times, it may be between the founder and the woman; this act often results to fornication since nature cannot be cheated. Since nothing is hidden under the heaven; when the real husband gets to know, it often leads to divorce and disintegration.

As a corollary, Prayer on the mountain often creates enmity within the family. The causative agent of a problem may be traced to

someone that is closer to the person that goes for prayer. A times the person mentioned is often innocent, thereby creating permanent enmity. Occasionally, some family members may not know where their relative is.

Prayer Mountain often leads to untimely death. There are some sickness or diseases that can be easily treated with western medicine or a woman labouring that supposed to go to modern or western hospital often resort to Prayer Mountain for delivery or treatment through water and prayer. When the sickness has become severe or worst the patients would be rushed to western hospital which may result to death.

Moreover, some church planters often use members who come for prayer as cheap labourers on their farm. Many of them attribute the weeds on the farm to the work of the devil and therefore the work of the devil must be destroyed through uprooting. There is no any other name for this act rather than exploitation under the umbrella of religion because this act has no biblical bases. When some church leader is going out of the mountain, the sand under his feet is being struggled for as source of food to be taken like "Gari" to them it is medicinal.

As a corollary, some artisans have left their workshops for the mountain, as workers in different fields such as carpentry, bricklaying, motor mechanics, driving and a host of others. Such people are working for God according to the founders and stipends are being given to them weekly or monthly. This makes their families to suffer and to live in abject poverty.

Furthermore, properties of members are often confiscated like cars under the umbrella of praying on the car. The owner will be looking while the one in charge of the mountain will be using the car.

However, at this juncture, it is pertinent to make clarification that not all Prayer Mountains embark on aforementioned vices. Some of them are really working for God and meeting the needs of people spiritually. However, since the examples mentioned are not guessed or conjured, it is apparent that such occurrences are not fallacy but real.

Recommendations

This work has surveyed the concept of prayer in both the Old and New Testament. Similarly, some of the impacts and havocs of Prayer Mountains are uncovered. However, it is necessary to make the following recommendations for the proper and biblical appropriateness of Prayer Mountain in the contemporary Christian churches. The following are the recommendations to the Prayer Mountain Leaders, church Members and Christians in general.

Prayer Mountain Leaders

- Prayer Mountain Leaders must be God fearing people capable of avoiding sin.
- Any Christian leader that is led to establish a Prayer Mountain should ensure that God is leading him to do so.
- Prayer Mountain Leaders should avoid greediness and love of money but should pursue holiness, sincerity and faithfulness.
- Message of repentance must be preached on the mountain always not only prayer.
- Prayer Mountain Leaders should not attribute success to prayer to themselves but rather to God.

Church Members

- Church should be aware of the necessity of biblical and authentic Prayer Mountains.
- Emphasis should be placed on prayers in the church before moving to the mountain, that is to say that there should be cogent reason for not using the church for prayer.
- Church members should pray for spiritual leadership in the course of selection of Prayer Mountain. This is necessary because there is need for discerning spirit in this contemporary time where there are false prophets and fake Prayer Mountains.
- As much as possible churches should use church auditorium for Prayer Mountains since God is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent and he is not limited by time or space.

Christians in general

Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) which are the umbrella organizations of the Christian faith should monitor the establishment and proliferation of Prayer Mountain to ensure viability and seriousness. Moreover, any erring leader in Prayer Mountains should be disciplined.

Finally, every individual Christian should note that they should demonstrate faith in God and not all that is glitter is gold and that craziness for miracle should be avoided.

Conclusion

It is obvious that Indigenous Churches have made, they are still making their necessary impact especially in the areas of their persistent, emphasis on prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit through effectual fervent prayers to wrought wonders. Talking about Prayer Mountain for co-operate and solitary prayers they are thriving. Some adherents are of the opinion that they cannot approach God directly; rather they need to go through the 'Intermediary'. In this case, the issue of priesthood of all believers is not applicable.

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Chapter 32

'Orin Ori-Oke': A Thematic Examination of Songs used in Ikoyi Prayer Mountains, Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Prayer Mountaineering is a dominant religious activity practised by Christians in Africa; it represents a culture of setting apart specific spaces such as groves, thick forests, hilly places and mountains, river banks and so forth by African Indigenous Churches (AICs) for spiritual exercises. Prayer Mountains were peculiar places where founders of many AICs encountered divine interactions and over time have become places where a myriad of religious activities, including observance of prescribed period of seclusions, offering of special prayers and related activities take place. There is a proliferation of Prayer Mountains in Oyo, Osun and Ekiti states. While religious, social and economic activities of Prayer Mountains have received scholarly investigation, no known study has examined their musical activities. This study, therefore, investigates the musico-cultural practices taking place in Ikoyi Prayer Mountains, Osun State, Nigeria, using ethnographic research approach. It also identified thematic orientations and attendant dynamics embedded in the song texts. Songs were musically represented using Sibelius 7.5 music notation software and data subjected to content analysis.

Introduction

Music remains one of the important elements in religion that performs several functions such as communicative, invocative, and intercessory amongst others. Many world religions, from traditional to contemporary societies, communicate with the 'other' world through music as a viable means to achieving such communication. Among Christians, the incessant use of music in worship reveals its essentiality in Christian divine services. The idea of conducting

Christian worship without the use of music is almost inconceivable, as breath is to living so music is to divine service. Scholars have unequivocally emphasized the importance of music in Christian religion (Afolábí, 2000, Loko, 2011, Price, 2015).

In African traditional societies, music accompanies the day-to-day activities of the people. In its religion, music is considered a potent force in the observance and performance of religious rites by its worshippers. It is believed that music aids smooth connection with the divine, not only in African traditional religions, but also religion of other world cultures. Like every other religious worship, African traditional worship engages music and prayers in its divine worship. A thorough examination of these worship components will reveal the nexus between each of them. For instance, music, vocal or instrumental may be offered as a prayer and prayer also offered in form of music. While music helps humans to communicate their feelings with each other, prayer, on the other hand, serves as means of communicating with the divine. Both prayer and music can be engaged whether at individual or collective (congregational) worship.

Prayer is another indispensable element of religion. In his broadest sense, "prayer is a discursive act that bridges human limitation and the spiritual realm" (Baquedano-Lopez, 1999, p.197). Generally, prayer can be defined as an act of communicating with God. In religious context, prayer connects the human to the spiritual realm. People pray with the understanding of their human limitation and dependence on the 'other' world. "The spiritual world is populated by hierarchies of different beings. Prayer always starts with a relationship to one of these beings. When we pray, we immediately make a feeling –connection to a specific spiritual being" (Evans, 2015). The connective nature of prayer between two persons validates the communicative function of prayer.

However, the act of Prayer Mountaineering as seen in the frequent visit to some specific prayer spaces or mountains popularly referred to as *orí-òkè* (mountain top) or *orí-òkè àdúrà* (Prayer Mountain) is regular routine among the Yorùbá Christians of southwestern Nigeria. The belief in the potency of certain sacred spaces in African religion, especially the Yorùbá, accounts for the patronage and

proliferation of Prayer Mountains within the southwestern part of the country. It is believed that these Prayer Mountains are potent and are capable of aiding speedy answers (Falaye, 2015: 12) to prayer requests made in such places. Like the sacred grooves and forest in African traditional societies, Prayer Mountains too have sacred priest attached to them. The priest are sometimes referred to as *Bàbá orí-òkè* (Father in charge of the mountain) or *Bàbá Alàdúrà* (Father of prayer). The spiritual head of the Prayer Mountain is believed to be vested with some spiritual authorities that can help mediate with the Supreme Being.

The establishments and leadership of these Prayer Mountains in southwestern Nigeria can be linked to the expanded religious activities of the African Indigenous Churches (AICs) to some other sacred spaces outside the conventional church spaces. As classified by Aiyeboyin (2002), AICs in Nigeria include Christ Apostolic Church, The Church of the Lord (*Alàdúrà*), Cherubim and Seraphim Church and The Celestial Church of Christ. These African indigenous churches also referred to as the *Alàdúrà* movement, meaning in Yorùbá, "the prayer people" because they pray more than other churches (Kofi, 2011: 150) are known to be people given to incessant prayers and believe in the powers of prayers, dreams, revelations and prophecies.

Emphasis on prayers is evident in theology as well as practice in the *Alàdúrà* movement (Fálayè, 2015: 12). The need to expand their prayer haven void of distraction and noise led to the establishments of Prayer Mountains outside their initial church buildings. It is believed that such mountains provide a serene and spiritual atmosphere to commune with God in fasting, prayer, and worship (Aina, 2006: 3). Given the supernatural powers claimed to be divinely vested on these Prayer Mountains, patrons believe that chronic issues, spiritual or physical can be resolved only at such sites. Prayer Mountains, either on a hilly site or at ground level provide a more conducive atmosphere of worship and divine revelation. The conducive atmosphere is characterized among other things by the solemnity and calmness of the location of the Prayer Mountains, which helps to focus the attention of a person on the spiritual events

taking place on such site. In the words of Smith, "ritual practice and spaces on the truly important, that which is spiritual or divine; they encourage us to pay attention" (Kilde, 2008: 185).

Prayers and music (songs, drumming and dancing, in Africa) play significant roles in any divine worship. Prayer Mountains are inherently unique in their establishment, mode of worship and religious operations as oppose to the mainstream churches. Given the vast musical activities that accompany prayer sessions in various Prayer Mountains, which has been obviously ignored in extant literature on sacred spaces, Prayer Mountain in particular, there is the need for an ethnomusicological examination of the musical form and content of these 'Prayer Mountain-songs' (*orin orí-òkè àdúrà*) as well as the socio-cultural ideologies that influence or shape the production and usage of music in the Prayer Mountains.

Music and Prayer as Modes of Communication in Religious Worship

Music and prayer are inseparable components in any religious gathering and/or worship but are distinct acts of worship. Both can be used to communicate thoughts, feelings, emotions, ideas, and message among individuals or group of people. Sometimes, this communication may be between the divine and the human. Prayer is a form of religious or spiritual activity common to all the "Abrahamic" traditions (i.e., Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and has strong parallels in other religious traditions e.g., Buddhism, Hinduism, and Shinto (Lambert et.al, 2010, p. 209). Generally, prayer can be defined as an act of communicating with God. In religious context, prayer connects the human to the spiritual realm. When we pray, we immediately make a feeling –connection to a specific spiritual being (Evans, 2015, p. 2). The connective nature of prayer between two persons validates the communicative function of prayer. Prayers can be sung or said (Baquedano-Lopez, 1999, p.197).

Like prayer, music is also a kind of communication. The combinations of various elements of music with or without text help to convey various meanings and interpretations to performers (producers) as well as listeners (consumers). In Christian liturgy, like

other religious liturgy, prayers can be said using music (song) while music (songs) can be used as prayers. Music and prayers are known to perform several functions in religious functions or gathering. Some of the functions include but are not limited to invocative, intercessory, petitionary, educative, informative and entertaining. Commenting on communicative function of music in Christian worship, Olujoku (as cited in Loko, 2011) noted that:

> In spiritual churches music at worship is a manifestation of man's conscious expression of praise and thanksgiving to God; it was also a reflection of man's spiritual upliftment, yearning and true worship. Music involving handclapping, swaying, dance movement and the jingling of bells usually spur worshippers to a state of spiritual ecstasy. He further explained that even at prayers there are song punctuations as evidence of the belief of a prayer already answered. (p.19)

Through music, worshippers can make their requests known to God as well as articulate their religious, social and economic concerns.

History of Orí-òkè Ìkòyí, Osun State, Nigeria

Orí-òkè Ìkòyí is located in a village in Osun State of Nigeria, about 2 km from the Ife-Ibadan express road. The mountain is believed to have been founded and established in 1936 by the Late Apostle Ayo Babalola and four other men of God. In an interview with the present camp pastor, Pastor Femi, at the mountain, he claimed that late Babalola and his team were divinely instructed by God to travel from Ilesa, another major town within the state, and go to Ìkòyí town to locate a mountain where He (God) had deposited divine supernatural powers and that a sign will be given to identify and confirm the mountain. Apostle Babalola and his team arrived at Christ Apostolic Church, Oke-Alafia in Ìkòyí and met with one Baba Osuolale who was the *baba ijo* -father of the church (a title given to a revered elder in the church) and narrated their mission in Ìkòyí to him. Together with Baba Osuolale, the team went on the search for

the divine mountain as instructed by God throughout the whole of Ìkòyí village; they didn't get confirmation of any sort. After several search, Baba Osuolale led them to a hamlet known as Ero-omo in Ìkòyí village where the community elders in this settlement took Babalola and his team to Ìkòyí mountain in Ero-omo village. Traditionally, this newly found mountain is usually venerated at the basement by the community from time immemorial. It was reported that while ascending the mountain, late Apostle Babalola and his team together with the elders from the village saw the footprint of an angel on the rock, a sign which was divinely promised to authenticate the spiritual potency of the mountain. Sighting this sign, they rejoiced, praised and worship God on the top of the mountain and immediately consecrated it as a place for prayers, a purpose the mountain still serves till date. Among those who journeyed to the mountain with Babalola are Late Prophet Babajide, Baba Ologiri and Baba Abudaale.

Late Ayo Babalola and his team were said to visit the mountain and could stay up to a month to pray. After praying at the end of each day, they usually descend to the hamlet at the basement of the mountain where they were given a room to provide shelter during rainfall and safety from dangerous and wild animals such as lion, snakes and other strange beings which were natural habitants on the mountain. For convenience, Late Ayo Babalola and his team saw the need to construct an accommodation on top of the mountain; this necessitated the construction of the first building on the mountain.

Ikoyi is largely an agrarian community with considerable timber exploitation from the surrounding forest. The Prayer Mountain is about 1.5km farther from the village. It is a large mass of solid rock about 250m above sea level with 420 constructed steps to ease climbing to the summit. The mountain top is flat with slight undulations in the immediate vicinity. Ikoyi village and the surrounding settlements can be clearly viewed from the mountain top. Located on the mountain top are three church buildings adjacent to one another and constructed in the 1940s, 1974, and 1997, respectively. They have the capacity to sit 100, 300, and 1500 worshippers at once, respectively. Directly opposite these buildings

is an expansive flat and open surface arena, which serves as the crusade ground on the mountain top with a capacity to accommodate over 3000 worshippers at once. Social amenities such as electricity (via a generating set), water, and toilet facilities are available. The church auditoriums serve as both a place of worship and "accommodation" for "pilgrims" on the mountain, together with the surrounding trees that provide shade during the hot tropical sunshine in the daytime. Food items are brought by individuals (those not fasting) for their personal needs. This particular mountain is exclusively for male worshippers irrespective of age. Located about 600m away and separated by a deep valley is the twin Prayer Mountain for "female" worshippers, but a couple (i.e. a woman and her husband) can go there together, especially over problems common to them. The administration and control of these mountains are the responsibility of the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC).

Methodology

Ethnography method was employed in the study. A total of five (5) visits were made to the mountain. The researchers participated in all the general sessions of prayers at the mountain both day and night. Interviews were conducted with different categories of people on the mountains: three (3) in-house ministers including the residential pastor on the mountain, 5 musicians and 10 participants.

Music and musical activities in Orí-òkè Ìkòyí, Osun State, Nigeria

Music is a vital component in religious worship especially in Prayer Mountains. A careful and critical observation of the music and musical activities on the mountain seems different from what is obtainable in the mainstream church setting. For instance, there are no permanent musicians on the Prayer Mountain. Musicianship is voluntary. Pilgrims with musical skills who have also come for prayers are encouraged to provide both vocal and instrumental

accompaniments during music performances. In Ìkòyí Prayer Mountain, music making is very participatory during the joint prayer sessions. Apart from the musicians who play from the instrumentalist stand, some are also seen to either play the *agogo* (bell), *sekere* (maracas) or tambourine. Some men also assist as backup singers during singing. Unlike the mainstream church settings where musicians especially instrument players are engaged professional, musicians are mainly volunteers in Ìkòyí Prayer Mountain. Whether or not this practice is the same in other Prayer Mountains in southwest Nigeria is a discourse space will not permit us here.

Cross section of musicians at Ikoyi Prayer Mountain (Field work, January 2017)

Although this Prayer Mountain is known for incessant prayer activities, it should be noted that music especially songs are of significant use during prayers sessions. Every moment of prayers is interspersed with vigorous songs with instrumental accompaniment. One phenomenon that is of remarkable interest in the songs used in Ikoyi Prayer Mountain is the spontaneous compositions of these songs. The respondents (ministers and the pastor in charge of the Ikoyi mountain) all claimed that most of the songs used during their ministrations are divinely given or inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The symbiotic relationship that exists between the songs and the prayers is of great importance both in context and content. Prayer

points (text) are generated from songs and song text are generated from prayers. A thorough examination of the music typology used in Prayer Mountain reveals the following:

1. Use of European hymn/tunes

It was observed at different times during the worship session at Ìkòyí Prayer Mountain that the worship leader makes use of few European hymns sung in Yoruba language. Some of the hymns commonly used hymns include "O worship the king" sung to the tune of Hanover, and "All the power of Jesus Name" sung to the tune of Diadem. The use of European hymns in Ìkòyí Prayer Mountains can be traced to the activities of the early Christian missionary in Nigeria. Hymn singing was part of the Christian liturgies handed over to the African believers by the various European missionary groups. The major musical practice in the early Yoruba churches was singing of Christian hymns because it involved congregational participation (Owoaje, 2014, p.1). While singing of hymns forms part of the musical activities in Prayer Mountains, the manner at which these hymns are performed is worth discussing here. For instance, some of the hymns were performed in free time manner not minding the time signature of the hymn. Indiscriminate use of fermata (a long sustain or pause) in between phrases of the hymn. This intentional alteration of the hymn rhythmical is noticed only when the hymns are used at the beginning of the worship session for invocation, a practice which is African in nature. An excerpt is seen below:

E.. wo.. le f'Oba……	O worship the King
O..ni..fe…ju.. lo……	All glorious above
E..so...ti..i..pa……	Oh, grateful sing His power
A.. ti..i..fe..re……..	and His love

2. Use of western pop-gospel songs

The use of western popular gospel (pop-gospel) music was also observed in the music used in Ìkòyí Prayer Mountain. In this work, western pop-gospel songs are Christian songs which were composed,

performed and recorded from the west, Europe and United States of America, and were made popular here in Africa through the mass media, specifically, electronic. Such songs include: "Thanks" and "Blessed be the name of the Lord" by Don Moen, "Trading my sorrows" by Twilla Paris to mention a few. Acculturation is highly responsible for this musical mix as witnessed on Prayer Mountain. People, irrespective of their religion, ethnicity or gender, carry with them their cultural belongings wherever they go. The denominational affiliations (Pentecostal, African indigenous churches) as well as the attendant worship/musical style of the participants at the Prayer Mountain is evident through the use western pop-gospel songs in Prayer Mountains.

3. Use of African indigenous tunes

One of the notable contributions of the AICs to the Christian liturgy in African is the inclusion and observance of some African indigenous tunes. This was made possible because Africans wanted a more 'natural' way of worship which they at home with, a lieu way they found with the use of existing folk tunes in their worship. Yoruba Christians find these folk tunes as readymade music raw materials that can be reproduced to suit their musical needs in their newly found religion. Hence, the use of Yoruba indigenous tunes in the songs used in Prayer Mountain. An example is given below:

Thematic Examinations of Song used in Ìkòyí Prayer Mountain

Songs used in Ìkòyí Prayer Mountain reveals various themes which include thanksgiving and adoration, quest for the power of Holy Spirit, spiritual warfare, prosperity and healing.

Themes on thanksgiving and adoration

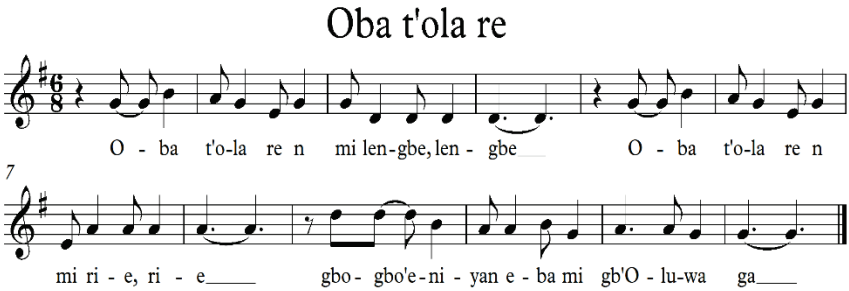
It is a known practice in African societies that homage is given to those who deserves it. Among the Yoruba for example, a king, who epitomizes leadership and authority, is revered and adored by his subjects in the community. In same manner, participants at the Prayer Mountain see the need to adore and worship their heavenly

king who is the supreme being in anticipation of "special blessings – children, prosperity, victory over enemies, or any of the manifold things of this life of which they feel in need for their spirit, body or estate" (Idowu, 1962, p. 113). Kings in Yoruba societies like every other African society are adorned with gorgeous royal apparels which distinguish in the community. The song below gives a clear description of the royalty of God as seen by the participants on Prayer Mountain:

Oba t'ola re n mi legbe legbe
Oba t'ola re n mi rie rie
Gbogbo eniyan e ba mi gb'Oluwa ga

Translation

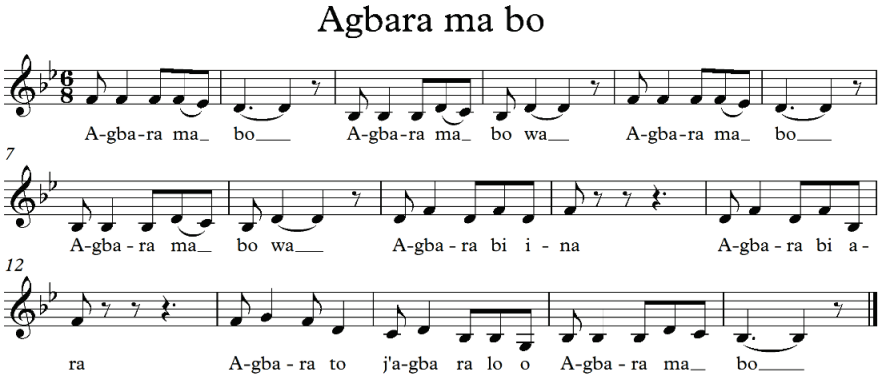
To the king whose royal apparel sways powerfully
To the king whose royal apparel sways majestically
Everyone, please join me to hail this Lord



Themes on the Holy Spirit

A detailed examination of the songs used in Ìkòyí Prayer Mountain reveals a myriad of musical, cultural and religious elements embedded in the songs. First, is the acknowledgement and believe in the power and the direction of the Holy Spirit (Ayegboyin, 2010). All the participants, both ministers and pilgrims at the mountain remarked that the Holy Spirit is largely responsible in enabling them to do the impossible, hence the incessant request for the power of

the Holy Spirit. "Inspirations to lead prayers as well as songs are given by the Holy Spirit, He- the Holy Spirit knows what He wants to do in the life of His people with the prayers and songs" (An interview with Pastor Femi, a guest minister at Ìkòyí Prayer Mountain, Field work, January 2017). Among the Yoruba, spiritual warfare requires the support of a supernatural being/force whose power supersedes the evil powers that they intend to engage with. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is seen as an embodiment of such power(s) by the participants at the Prayer Mountain to combat the evil forces. An example is seen in the excerpt below:



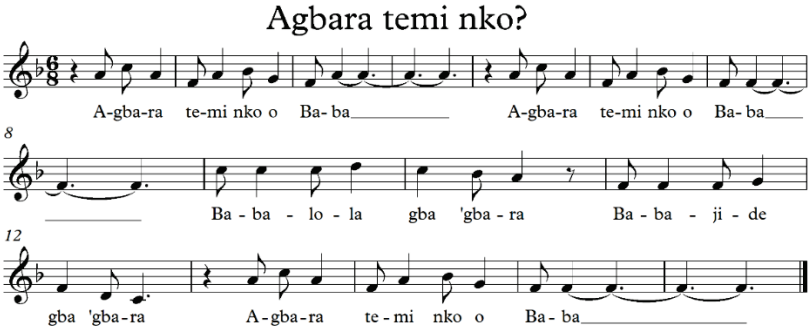
Translation

Power come
Power come
Power like fire
Power like thunder
Power that supersedes other power
Power come

The song text above reveals the representation of the Holy Spirit through some elements such *ina* (fire) and *ara* (thunder). Biblically, the Holy Spirit is represented by a dove, water and fire. These symbols are not alien to Africans, especially the Yoruba, as the representative elements are known to be destructive in nature and manifestations. The participants on the Prayer Mountains believe

that upon receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, they can spiritually combat the unforeseen powers that they have come to 'fight' against. One of the participants at Ìkòyí Prayer Mountain remarked: "we have come to the mountain to fight and we need the power of the Holy Spirit" (Field work, January 2017).

On the need for a personal endowment of the power of the Holy Spirit, participants at the mountain believed that the 'personal acquisition' of the power can help them navigate the tide of the evil 'world' they found themselves hence, the need to ask for the power individually.



The above song reveals the quest of participants at the mountain to acquire the same power that was once given and evident in the life and ministries of some of the founders of some Prayer Mountains. Notably among them is Late Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola of the Christ Apostolic Church. He was renowned as one of the greatest Evangelist in Africa with incredible manifestations of the Holy Spirit in his life and ministry (Ogunriade & Ogbole, 2013). In the testimony of one Idowu about the power of the Holy Spirit which was evident in the ministry of Late Babalola goes thus:

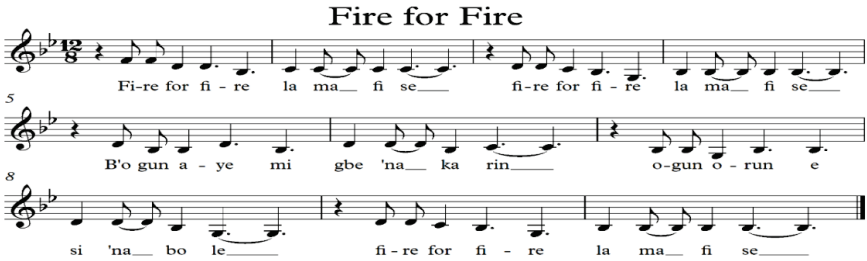
> The news of Prophet Joseph Babalola got to Lagos and we sent to him to visit us. The whole of Lagos and Ebute-meta shook when he came. He preached a wonderful sermon that thrilled the heart to us. Several works of healing were brought to him when he was here and the Lord stretched forth His hands to heal many people from various

churches. Since the days of the apostles, we have not seen such a manifestation full of great wonders of the power of God like this in this land (Ogunriade & Ogbole, 2013, p.150).

From the testimony given above, it is obvious why participants at Prayer Mountains craved for their own 'fair share' of the power of God as manifested in the life of Late Babalola. More importantly that this Prayer Mountain as earlier mentioned was founded and consecrated by Late Ayo Babalola, the participants believe that the mountain provides a contact point with some residual powers which Babalola encountered on the same mountain. It is pertinent to note the questioning character of the above song text: *Agbara temi nko o Baba?* (Father, where is my own power?). The Father in this context refers to God, the giver of all good gifts. It is believed that the supernatural powers that Babalola manifested was given to him by God and that the same God is still willing to give same power if they, the participants at the Prayer Mountain, ask in faith.

Themes on spiritual warfare

Generally, African worldview holds that 'what happens in the seen world is formed and directed from the unseen world' (Masondo, 2014, p.8). This suggests why Africans, Yoruba in particular, believe that certain force(s) is/are responsible for their fortune or misfortune as the case may be. This view to engage in warfare with the 'other' world is not only African; it also finds footing in the Christian teachings as expressed by Apostle Paul when he declared "For we *wrestle* not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this *world*, *against spiritual wickedness in high places"* [italics mine] (Bible: Ephesians 6: 13). As earlier mentioned, participants who engage in Mountain Prayers, claim that the mountain is the most preferred place to engage in spiritual battle. Spiritual combat through prayers is evident in the songs used in Ikoyi Prayer Mountain.



Translation

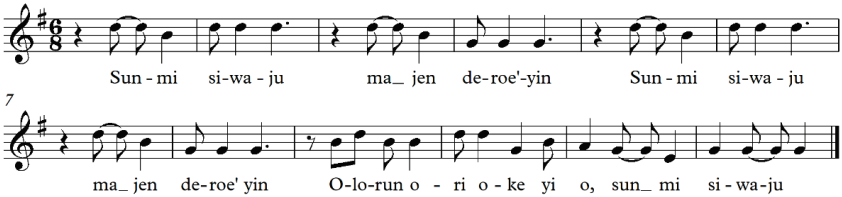
It shall be fire for fire
No matter how intense the spiritual war may be
The hosts of heaven are combat ready
It shall be fire for fire

The text of the song above clearly shows the warfare perception of the participants at the Prayer Mountain who are combat ready to face the 'other' world as seen in the expression: 'fire for fire'. The song also highlights that the fact that the participants at the Prayer Mountain believe that the metaphysical powers are stronger and can subdue that of the world's evil powers. During the rendition of the above song, the tempo is very fast, with sonorous clapping of hands, vigorous dance accompanied by all available musical instruments.

Themes on prosperity

Prosperity to an African man implies the total state of his wellbeing – mentally, socially, economically and physically. In the belief of the Yoruba in respect to the concept of prosperity, the Supreme Being – *"Olodumare* is the fountain of all benefits. He is the author and Giver of all good things that man can possess-children, wealth, possessions, good living, good character, everything that exists for the benefit of man" (Idowu, 1962, p.53). Arguably, one of the prominent reasons while Prayer Mountaineering is a common practice in African, Yoruba of southwest Nigeria particularly, is the need for economic prosperity. This is overtly necessary given the poor socio-economic situation witnessed in the region and the need for a spiritual 'intervention' to improve the socio-economic status.

Sunmi Siwaju



Translation

Move me forward
Never to be backward
O God of this mountain
Move me forward

It is evident from the above song text that participants at the Prayer Mountain desire a positive social mobility. The expression 'move me forward' reveals the quest for a progressive and increased life of one who feels some form of stagnancy and redundancy. Attendance register at the Prayer Mountain shows that participants are from different social, religious/denominational, ethnic and educational background. More often than not, Prayer Mountaineering is in a quest for a 'better' lifestyle, physically and spiritually. Since in the belief of the Yoruba that prosperity is an 'all-in-one' experience, it is important to note that prosperity could be achieved in any sphere of man. Joblessness, infertility, late marriage, lack of admission, spiritual/ministerial inefficiency, incessant ill-health to mention a few are regarded as been sign of backwardness.

Conclusion

This article brings to the fore the fact that the religious experience of a people cannot be divorced from their cultural orientation. The Prayer Mountain as a physical and spiritual/religious space do witness myriad of musical activities which to a large extent are culturally influenced. African, Yoruba specifically, socio-cultural beliefs and values are consciously reflected in the songs generated and performed during prayer sessions at the Prayer Mountains. The

study reveals that that the need for the person and the power of the Holy Spirit is of paramount interest to the participants at the mountain. This power they claim can help them navigate the world of uncertainties. Warfare is another significant theme in many of the songs used at Ikoyi Prayer Mountain. It is generally believed that the mountain is a place to wrestle with the evil powers that might be responsible for their mischief. This suggests why songs at the mountain are 'war-like' both in text and tempo.

Although the songs are claimed to be divinely inspired, the question that comes to mind is: where and does the divine intercepts the natural-man and his cultural inclination? The music typology of the music witnessed at the Prayer Mountain can be regarded as a total brand of religious/spiritual music.

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Chapter 33

The Pragmatic Functions of the *Ori Oke* Rules and Regulations (RRs) in Ilorin Metropolis

Joseph Omoniyi Friday-Otun

Abstract

*Virtually, all the Ori Oke adopt rules and regulations that are binding on all members, in order for peace and tranquillity to reign, and for law and order to be maintained. However, rules and regulations at Ori Oke, as acts of communication have not attracted significant research attention. This paper examines the Ori Oke rules and regulations (*RR*s) in Ilorin metropolis from the pragmatic perspective. Participant observation and survey methods were adopted. The researcher went round almost all the Ori Oke in Ilorin metropolis to document the rules and regulations adopted by them. All the* RR*s collected at each Ori Oke were harmonised into fourteen (14) types or clauses. The findings of this paper reveal that all clauses of the* RR*s were themselves empowered by the phenomenon of a binding pragmeme. It was further discovered that all the* RR *were produced from the linguistic, socio-cultural, physical and psychological contexts through the Ori Oke activities and sustenance. It also came to the limelight that the* RR*s contains the practs of introducing/pronouncing, forbidding/disallowing, gender-focusing and advancing. The chapter concludes that complying with all the clauses of the* RR*s was possible because all the participants could deploy the relevant socio-cultural knowledge (SCK), shared situational knowledge (SSK) voice (vce), reference (ref) and relevance (rel) features required to interpret and understand the* RR*s.*

Introduction

The act of visiting sacred places, particularly, *Ori Oke* for solitary prayers, retreat and worship by Christians and non-Christians in Ilorin, particularly, and in Southern Nigerian generally, is becoming a routine or common place. No doubt, religion has become a major

determinant in the social, economic, political and cultural life of so many Nigerians. That "religious" Nigerians have devised so many ways of conducting prayers and other pious activities is not a surprise. In all religions, prayer links devotees with the gods, or God that are (is) held in awe, dread and transcendental reverence. Prayer, according to Baquedano-Lopez (1999), reflects a discursive act that bridges the gap between the humans and the spiritual realm. In other words, human beings are connected to the spiritual realm through prayer. One main feature that distinguishes prayer from other religious activities is it limitlessness in space, time and personality. By implication, prayer, depending on its type, can be offered anywhere, anytime and by anybody.

Interestingly, and despite its limitlessness in terms of space, time and personality, visits are made to some specific sacred spaces or mountains by Christians and non-Christians for the purpose of prayer. This act is popular among the African Indigenous Churches (Ayegboyin and Ishola 1999). Falaye (2015) opines that it is the believe of these set of Christians that Prayer Mountains (Ori Oke) are potent and capable of aiding the speed of answers to requests made in such places. Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999) describe Prayer Mountains as places of worship, or saying solitary prayers, devoid of the hustle-bustle syndrome of life. According to them, churches, temporary or permanent buildings, have been built on the *Ori Oke* with resident pastors, prophets and prophetesses, residing in these structures to attend to the spiritual needs of the attendees.

Prayer Mountains are then becoming institutional, requiring the need for the leaders or authorities to plan, coordinate and monitor the *Ori Oke*. Many *Ori-Oke* have their management teams or committees, depending on the circumstances that give birth to the establishment of the Prayer Mountain. In Ilorin, the *Ori-Oke* are founded either through churches or by individuals. They include the *Ori Oke* at the University of Ilorin, Main Campus; *Ori-Oke* at Alagbede area Ilorin; *Ori-Oke* at Olunlade Ilorin; Michael Imodu Prayer Mountain at Michael Imodu Institute of Labour Studies, Ilorin; *Ori Oke* at Basin-Sango, Ilorin; *Ori-Oke* Isegun at Tanke, Ilorin;

Ori-Oke Aseyori at Irede, Ilorin; *Ori Oke* Agbara at Sobi, Ilorin, and others.

For security reasons and effective control and monitoring, all of these *Ori-Oke* have rules and regulations (RRs) to be complied with, by both founders and attendees. Hornby (2015: 1294) defines "rule" as a statement of what may, must or must not be done in a particular situation, while he describes "regulation" (p.1239) as an official rule made by government, or some other authority controlling something by means of rules. While all the *Ori-Oke* in Ilorin are open to all would-be users, with most of them strictly guided by the RRs.

Needless to say, that all operations or interactions at *Ori-Oke* are conducted through language. In other words, prayers, counselling, worship, instructing, announcements and other activities are done by the use of language. Most of the affairs of these *Ori Oke* are conducted by the use of Yoruba and English for the Christians, and Yoruba and Arabic for the *Ori Oke* directed by the Muslims. It must be added that Christian meetings at *Ori Oke* under the aegis of Igbo pastors and leaders are mainly conducted in the Igbo and English languages.

Since language is crucial to the operation of the *Ori Oke,* the activities or operations at all the *Ori Oke* can be analysed linguistically, sociolinguistically, stylistically, pragmatically and discourse – wise. In some *Ori Oke*, sign posts are erected at the base of the mountains with all the dos and don'ts of the *Ori Oke* spelt out for all to see, read and take to heart before climbing up for any purpose. In cases where there is nothing of such, constant and persistent announcements are made by custodians of the *Ori Oke* to keep all the attendees abreast of the RR. These codes are either written or spoken, thereby lending them to analysis at any linguistic level, particularly at the level of pragmatics, which is the focus or thrust of this paper. Pragmatics, the study of meaning in context, is deployed in this chapter to explore the language features inherent in the rules and regulations applicable at all the *Ori Oke* in Ilorin metropolis.

A Brief History of Ilorin Metropolis and the *Ori Oke* System

The first and the prominent settlers in Ilorin in the 18th century were the Yoruba (Amolegbe, 2012). Later, other ethnic groups such as the Fulani, Nupe, Hausa and Baruba came to settle. According to Jawondo (2002), the pastoral Fulani settled at Ago area, while the Hausa, Nupe and Baruba settled at Gambari quarters under the leadership of one Mallam Bako. As a result of military, political economic and religious necessities, these ethnic groups gradually interacted with one another, and this interaction culminated in 'emirateship' during the period. Amolegbe (2012) asserts that the power and influence of the Yoruba became prevalent over other settlers, perhaps because they were the most populous then, and that other settlers had to learn Yoruba in order to be able to communicate. Amolegbe claims that Sheikh Alimi, who came to settle in Ilorin had communication problem that he had to rely on Olufadi, his host, to interpret for him.

Although Ilorin indigenes up till now, are predominantly Muslims, Jawondo (2002) claims that the adherents of African Religion (Afrel) largely populated Ilorin up to the beginning of the 19th century. But from the beginning of the 19th century, Islam took over as the result of the aggressive efforts of the Islamic scholars, who settled at Oke-Suna, and who vigorously and intensively engaged in the preaching to the natives, as well as teaching and converting them to Islam. In spite of the conversion, according to Amolegbe (2012), from the pre-colonial days, Yoruba was the language of inhabitants, with the use of Yoruba, being so strong that Islamic scholars that came with Eastern education had to resort to Yoruba for the interpretation of Quranic verses and messages in order to teach their converts.

But the then prominent ruling house, Afonja relied on Sheikh Alimi, the spiritualist to defeat the attacking army of Aláàfin of Ọyọ. Consequently, the superior prowess of Sheikh Alimi paved way for the power shift that ensured the enthronement of the Fulani dynasty above the Afonja ruling house. But the languages of Fulani, Hausa, Nupe and Baruba suffered a great loss to Yoruba and up till now, no

indigene of Ilorin, who has not had any contact with any language outside Ilorin, can speak any other language than Yoruba. Even, the Emir's descendants could not speak any other language, because the Yoruba language was the only language exposed to them for acquisition.

However, the story changed with the advent of colonialism. Ilorin fell into the northern protectorate and schools were established with the mix of Islamic and Western education. Although Christianity was not permitted in Ilorin when it was first introduced in the 19th century for the fear of contaminating Islam, permission was later granted in 1917 with the caveat that churches and mission schools should operate at the outskirts (Jawondo, 2002). After independence, Western schools were established which grew side by side with the mission schools. In the Western schools, Yoruba, Arabic and English languages were in the curriculum. With the creation of states, Ilorin, like many other urban towns and cities in Nigeria, experienced the influx of people of various ethnic stocks, religions, cultures, including foreigners from other countries. According to Uweh (2012), Ilorin is a confluence of cultures, populated by the Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Baruba, other Nigerians, as well as foreign nationals.

Although, it is hard to find any church established among the core Ilorin settlements, Christian activities in the city have been increasing by leaps and bounds. The main line churches, such as, the Baptist church, the Anglican Church, the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), previously known as Evangelical Church of West Africa, and others, have become strongly entrenched in the history of Christianity in Ilorin. Likewise, the African Independent Churches (AICS), particularly popular for their use of *Ori Oke,* are equally waxing stronger in Ilorin. The AICs or the *Aladura* churches, such as the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C & S), the Apostolic Church (TAC), the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), as well as many Pentecostal churches pay great attention to the use of *Ori Oke* for worship, retreat, solitary and corporate prayers, as well as other religious activities. Among these groups of Christians and some individuals, *Ori-Oke* prayers and activities are complementary to their

activities in the churches, which are located in the towns or cities. But some churches and individuals have erected permanent structures at the *Ori Oke* with their leaders and some members permanently residing there (Omotoye, 1999; Ogboji, 2001; Ayegboyin, 2011).

Pragmatics and the *Ori-Oke* Rules and Regulations.

Various efforts have been exerted to find an acceptable definition of pragmatics. This aspect of linguistics has been greatly broadened by pragmaticians themselves, making it so evasive to the ordinary eye. Pragmatics have been defined in various forms, depending on the areas of emphasis advanced by each defining scholars, so much so, that the definitions have emerged in aspects or forms. The pragmatic theory of Austin (1962) was in the form of speech act theory. Searle (1965, 1976) improved upon Austin's theory by postulating a cross-cultural import in pragmatics (Odebunmi, 2006). Bach and Harnish (1979) see pragmatics from the viewpoints of "intention" and "inference" culminating in what they refer to as Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MBs). Levison (1983) described pragmatics in terms of the study of language usage, with emphasis on anomalous and grammatical utterances, while Leckie-Tarry (1995) sees pragmatics as interpreting meaning within contexts.

Leckie-Tarry's definition strikes the core of pragmatics, as his notion reverberates in one way, or the other in the works of scholars who earlier, or later described pragmatics (See Stalnaker, 1978; Leech, 1983; Adegbija, 1987; Thomas, 1995; Yule, 2002; Lawal 2012). In all the studies on pragmatics, analysing the contexts of utterances and the functions performed by the utterances are the main issues. In many cases, scholars have explored pragmatic functions in various domains of language use. For instance, Adegbija (1982) focuses on functions of utterances in consumer advertisements; Lawal (2012) in stylistics; Sokari and Ugwu (2013) in metaphoric context, and Adeniji and Osunbade (2014) in literary context.

Another approach that is of significance to this study is the pragmatic act approach of Mey (2001). This is against the background that this approach is context- and function-derived. Hence, the

theory is modified and adapted for analysis in this chapter. *Ori Oke* rules and regulations, are injunctions made up of texts (RRs) that are amenable to pragmatic analysis by virtue of their contexts and functions. In essence, the rules and regulations of *Ori Oke* in Ilorin metropolis constitute the text for analysis in this chapter.

As earlier said, *Ori-Oke* (Prayer Mountain) is a sacred place, secluded from any interruption for the purpose of solitary prayer and worship of the transcendental God (Adegboyin, 2011). Adegboyin and Ishola (1999) claim that the emergence of African Independence Churches prompted the evolution of Prayer Mountain. Virtually all the *Ori Oke* have guiding rules and regulations, which are binding on all their leaders and attendees. The adage is apt that "Where there is no law, there is no sin". Though the *Ori Oke* rules and regulations in Ilorin are largely similar, each *Ori Oke* has its own autonomous authority. According to oral interviews conducted among all the prominent *Ori Oke* operators in Ilorin, it was discovered that the rules and regulations were created to maintain law and order. They were meant to curb the excesses of the attendees. In fact, I was informed of situations where some individuals had been warned, reprimanded and even banned for gross misconduct. Importantly, the consciousness of God's holiness, or the need to keep the place clean and holy for the Holy God, who everyone believes, is present at the *Ori-Oke,* is paramount in the mind of the leaders.

Theoretical Framework

A framework that is efficient or adequate for a study of this nature should be able to unravel the functions and contexts of the *Ori Oke* rules and regulations. For this purpose, the pragmatic act theory of Mey (2001) is found appropriate with some modifications. According to Keckes (2010: 1), "Mey's (2001) pragmatic act theory (PAT) originates in the socio-cultural interactional view, emphasizing the priority of socio-cultural and societal factors in meaning construction and comprehension". The prominence of the linguistic, physical, socio-cultural, and the psychological factors influencing the *Ori Oke* religious activities are mainly responsible for the rules and

regulations fashioned out to guide general conducts and interactions among the *Ori Oke* leaders and members.

Sokari and Ugwu (2013) assert that the pragmatic act theory as advanced by Mey (2001), provides a theoretical route for the analysis of situation-derived language acts. Mey (2001: 221) has earlier argued that a pragmatic act is instantiated through an "ipra," or a "pract," and this culminates in the accomplishment of a pragmeme. According to him, a "pract" is also an "allopract" which is a concrete instantiation of a particular pragmeme. Likewise, Adeniji and Osunbade (2014) opines that what determine a "pract" are solely participants' knowledge of interactional situation and the potential effect of a "pract" in a particular context. Put differently, pragmatic acts facilitates meaning interpretation, deriving from the situation that enhances the production of utterances, and the acts or functions realised by the utterances in the situation.

Two categories of entities are involved in the accomplishment of a pragmeme in the pragmatic theory. They are the textual part and the activity part. The activity part has to do with the speech act, the indirect speech act, the conversational acts, psychological acts (emotion), prosody (intonation stress), physical act (linguistic and paralinguistic features), etc. The activity part, as enumerated above are all the options available to the speaker to realise all the functions he/she so intends to perform. The second entity, the textual part helps the speaker to communicate his/her intentions. In this part, the speaker may make use of "inf" (inference) "ref" (reference), "rel" (relevance), "vce" (voice) "ssk" (shared situational knowledge), "mph" (Metaphor), and "m" (Metapragmatic joker). All these entities are activated by the context of speech, when spoken, or text, when written. In any case, the language user ought to adapt to the historical, cultural, environmental, sociological, psychological, political and linguistic contexts that constrain and enhance the use of particular language functions.

As earlier mentioned, *Ori Oke* rules and regulations evolve to guide the conducts and actions of leaders and members. Rules and regulations are not just said or written out, but are pragmatic activities that relate to other social activities at the *Ori Oke*. Attendees of *Ori*

Oke pray, talk and interact with others for the success of the Prayer Mountain activities. From the foregoing, a suitable theoretical approach capable of exploring the pragmatic features of *Ori Oke* should be developed. Therefore, a modified model, based on Mey's (2001) theory that is appropriate for analysis in this chapter is hereby designed and presented:

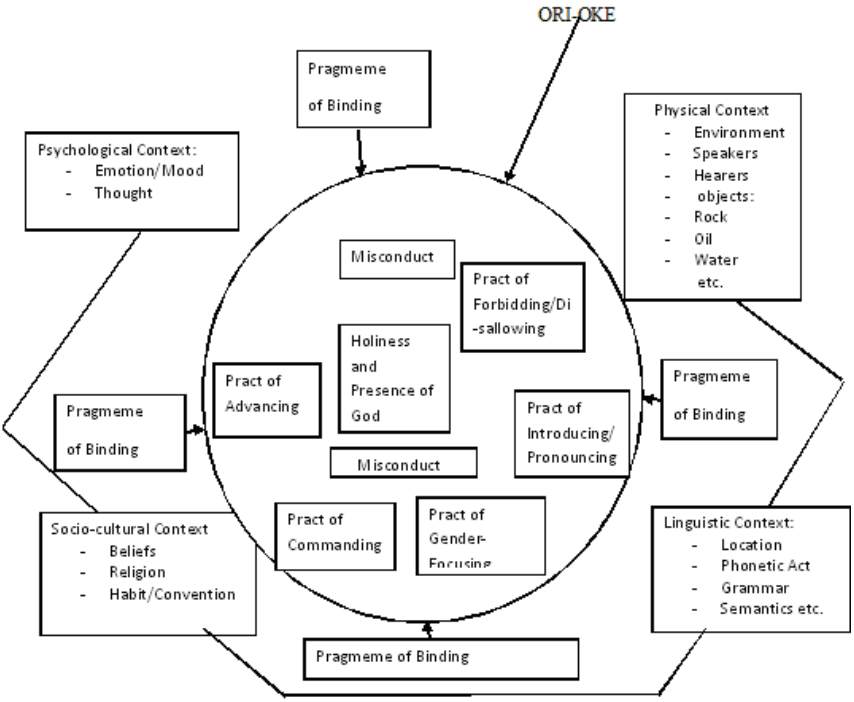

Fig 1: A Pragmatic Act Model of *Ori Oke* Rules and Regulations

In Figure 1, *Ori Oke* is depicted as a sacred place where the holiness and presence of God radiate. This is indicated by a box containing the "holiness and presence of God" inside the inner circle. A pentagonal box representing linguistic, physical, socio-cultural and psychological contexts subsumes all the operations or services at *Ori Oke*. However, no *Ori Oke* is devoid of human flaws, hence, the "misconduct" in two small boxes: one above the box containing the holiness and presence of God and another below it. The RRs of the *Ori Oke* are complied with through the pragmatic functions accomplished by the practs of introducing/pronouncing,

forbidding/disallowing, commanding/ordering, gender-focusing and advancing. The four outer boxes adjoined to the main circle shows the importance of the pragmeme of binding which empowers all the other rules and regulations in the model.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the location of *Ori Oke* in Ilorin metropolis (mainly in the outskirts) are divided into four zones– North, South, East and West. Most of them are labelled after the names of the area of their location. But those founded by individuals are named by their founders. These *Ori Oke* are: *Ori Oke* Basin–Ilorin East; *Ori-Oke* Agbara, Sobi–Ilorin North; *Ori Oke* Igbala, Olunlade–Iloriin South; *Ori Oke* University, Main Campus, University of Ilorin – Ilorin South; *Ori Oke* Isoromitan, Offa Garage Area – Ilorin South; *Ori Oke* Irapada, Balogun Tanke – Ilorin South; *Ori Oke* Isegun, Tanke – Ilorin South; *Ori Oke* Ose – Ilorin East; *Ori Oke* Michael Imoudu, Besdie Michael Imodu Institute of Labour Studies – Ilorin South; *Ori Oke* Alagbede, Alagbede Area – Ilorin South.

From the above-named mountains, it is observed that the majority of the mountains are in Ilorin South with a few are in Ilorin East, and only one in Ilorin North, while there is none in Ilorin West. However, the location of mountains is by nature, hence, it is beyond artificiality. Eight of the ten *Ori Oke* mentioned above were visited by the researcher. Oral interviews were conducted by the researcher with the leaders of these *Ori Oke* on the rules and regulations adopted by each of them, and why such were adopted. The rules and regulations, which are documented, harmonised and presented below as data, are subjected to pragmatic analysis.

Presentation of Data

RR 1: Rules and regulations of this Prayer Mountain, *Ori Oke*, are binding on everybody.

RR 2: No shoes, sandals and slippers of any kinds are allowed on this Mountain.

RR 3: Using of perfume is not allowed on this Mountain.

RR 4: No burning of coloured candles and incense on this Mountain; or, No burning of any kind of candles on this Mountain.

RR 5: No eating of pepper and oil on this Mountain

RR 6: Do not litter, defecate or wash anything on this Mountain

RR 7: Do not disturb others while praying

RR 8: Only water and olive oil are allowed on this Rock

RR 9: Once you are on this Mountain till 6.00pm, you must not go down until the next day.

RR 10: Women in her menstrual cycle should not come up for prayer during the menstrual period

RR 11: All women on this Mountain should remove their earrings and ornaments during prayers.

RR 12: All women should cover their heads during prayers.

RR 13: Everybody on the Mountain should participate fully during the environmental sanitation periods.

RR 14: God is clean and holy; this Mountain should be kept clean and holy at all times.

Analysis of Data

The data for this study numbering up to fourteen (14) have the pragmeme of binding through which each of them is empowered. This pragmeme (binding) furcates into the practs of introducing/pronouncing, forbidding/disallowing, commanding/ordering, gender-focusing and advancing.

Introducing/Pronouncing

The pract of introducing introduces or announces to all, the binding power of all the RR on all the members of the *Ori Oke*. The linguistic, socio-cultural, physical and psychological factors, underscoring *Ori Oke* operations and activities bring about the institution of moral and religious codes that are binding on all the attendees – leaders and members. In other words, RR 1 opens or introduces the whole codes by making an affirmative pronouncement to show that all the clauses of the RR are binding on everybody. The

contextual features in the shared socio-cultural knowledge (SCK), shared situational knowledge (SSK), voice (VCE) and reference (REF) contribute to the interpretation and application of RR 1 among the *Ori Oke* devotees. In some *Ori Oke,* the codes are written on bill boards and erected at the base, or on top, or at any other strategic positions within the vicinity of the mountains, while in some others, the RR are not written out; only constant announcements are made during prayer sessions and other meetings about the binding rules and regulations. The RR 1 sounds unsparing, because it shows that not even the leaders are free from the clauses of the codes of conduct. As indicated in the model, RR 1 is the clause that conveys the binding power of all other clauses.

Forbidding/Disallowing

In the linguistic, physical, socio-cultural and psychological contexts of the *Ori Oke*, the pract of forbidding or disallowing is accomplished. Clauses RR 2, RR3, RR 4, RR5 and RR8 convey all the conducts that cannot be allowed or condoned at the *Ori Oke*. For an attendee to enjoy the services at any of the Ori *Oke* in Ilorin, no shoes, sandals or footwear of any type is allowed. In some of the *Ori Oke,* RR 3 is not emphasized. However, the use of perfume may constitute a danger because it is so attractive to bees. To avoid being attacked by bees while praying some *Ori Oke* adopt RR 3. RR 4 is of two kinds, depending on the church background of the *Ori Oke* attendees. Attendees from Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C & S) and some *Aladura* churches believe in using candles and incense, while praying. However, some of them believe in using only white candles. Those who believe in this allow the burning of only white candles.

But the Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C), The Apostolic Church (TAC) and the Pentecostal churches forbid the use of candles of any kind. In that wise, they disallow the use of candles, but the churches in the former group allow either only the white type, as in the case of C&S, or any kinds, as is the case of the Celestial churches. RR 4 is then a clause that is not only optional, but applicable selectively to the *Ori Oke* devotees. The application of RR 4 is then strictly based

on the sck, ssk, voice, reference and relevance competences of the participants for its understanding, interpretation and compliance.

RR 5 is another optional clause to the *Ori Oke* devotees in Ilorin metropolis. The linguistic, physical socio-cultural and psychological contexts of RR 5, are rooted in the relevance of pepper and oil to the *attendees*. Only one *Ori Oke* has this clause. The sck, ssk, voice, reference and relevance of RR 5 rest on the type of fasting exercise adopted at the relevant *Ori Oke*. Socio-culturally there are two types of fasting: the ordinary and the white. RR5 is only applicable at the mountains where participants engage only in white fasting. White fasting is the kind of fasting broken daily, especially in the evenings with oiless and saltless food items. Food items, such as boiled yam (with no added salt or oil), fruits, pap, and similar food types are taken. Any meal taken with soup or stew is forbidden in the breaking of such fast at the concerned *Ori Oke*. As earlier said, the sck, ssk, voice, reference and relevance options open to the participants are engaged to understand and comply with RR 5. Likewise, RR 8 conveys the pract of disallowing the use of things like candles, coconuts or other objects except water and olive oil. This is observed at all *Ori Oke* operated by CAC, TAC, and Pentecostal church members.

Commanding/Ordering

RR 6, 7 and 9 are realized through the pract of commanding or ordering. This is against the background context of the need to prevent or curb bad habits. According to the leaders of most of the *Ori Oke,* some careless attendees are fond of littering the *Ori Oke* with dirty things, as well as disturbing others during prayers with irrelevant issues, thereby distracting some participants. RR 6, 7 and 9 are rooted in the linguistic, physical, psychological and socio-cultural contexts of the concerned Ori *Oke*, and the attendees deploy their sck, ssk, voice, reference and relevance features to understand and comply with them.

However, RR 9 looks strange and it is observed at only one *Ori Oke,* among all the others visited. This RR is a command to the attendees not to leave the mountain after 6pm on daily basis. So only

those who want to spend the night at the *Ori Oke* must be remain after 6pm. The leaders of this *Ori Oke* maintained that the clause is for security purpose, as it would allow the leaders and operators to control the inflow and outflow of people in the day hours.

Gender-Focusing

In the socio-cultural context of the AICs, women are seen as Christians with some limitations imposed by their nature. At all the *Ori Oke*, visited, the same view is maintained. Women have long hairs, use ornaments and undergo menstrual cycles. RR 10, 11 and 12 are focused on women, instructing them not to climb the mountain while menstruating; to remove earrings and any other ornaments; and to cover their heads before climbing the mountain for prayer. These RRs are rooted in the beliefs, habits and conventions of all the *Ori Oke*. It is believed that, God and His angels are holy, and they could be disturbed and be prevented from answering prayers when the gatherings consist of women who are menstruating, or women who are putting on earrings or uncovering their heads.

Hence, it is believed that menstruation may hinder prayer. Furthermore, beautification materials put on by women have been regarded by some *Ori Oke* operators as sources of idolatry and bewitchment. According to some *Ori Oke* leaders, God is against the use of these materials from the Biblical point of view. In addition, the Bible urges women to always cover their heads while praying because of Angels (1 Cor. 11: 3-10). This injunction is strictly observed in all the mountains visited. The Bible or religious context underpin the emergence of the pract of gender-focusing which is accomplished through the sck, ssk, reference and relevance features of the participants for compliance with the RR 10, 11 and 12.

However, RR 13 is an instruction to all: young and old, male and female, as well as the leaders. Environmental sanitation is done once a week in some mountains, while some do it twice a week. The saying is popular that "cleanliness is next to godliness". *Ori Oke* hygiene is a task for all the attendees. At some of the *Ori Oke* visited, attendees are seen cutting, hoeing and clearing during the stipulated sanitation hours and days. The need to keep the mountain clean and tidy, at all

times, accounts for the pract of instructing in RR 13, and its compliance is realised through the socio-cultural and the shared situational knowledge of the participants, as well as their comprehension of the features of voice, relevance and reference.

Advancing

The RR 14 concludes the clauses of the code of conduct at most of the *Ori Oke*. It advances a strong reason for the creation of rules and regulations. People go to *Ori Oke* with the belief of meeting with God. The belief in God's character of holiness and cleanliness explains the pragmatic perspective in RR 14, while it accomplishes the pract of advancing the reason for which the mountains should be kept tidy, neat and clean at all the times. The RR 14 is realized from the contextual background that the success of the *Ori Oke* operations solely depend on the presence of God, and on the continuous essence of doing all things to maintain such presence. The neatness, cleanliness and holiness character of God are traits to be imbibed by all the members of *Ori Oke* in order to encounter His presence, and for them to receive the divine blessings that accompany the act of being in His presence. All these inform the background contexts that trigger the understanding, interpretation and compliance by all attendees with RR 14 through the activation of their sck, ssk, reference, voice and relevance.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, the pragmatic functions of *Ori Oke* rules and regulations accomplished through the pragmeme of binding, which furcates into the practs of introducing/pronouncing, forbidding/disallowing, commanding/ordering, gender-focusing, instructing and advancing, have been explored. It was pointed out that the *Ori Oke* members, including the leaders or custodians, were bounded by the rules and regulations. These, according to the pragmatic theory of Mey (2001: 304) are the "acts framed, set up to be accomplished and subsequently carried out with maximal contextual implication..." Differently put, the rules and regulations

adopted at the *Ori Oke* are not just a code of conduct, but acts of communication warranted by the linguistic, socio-cultural, physical and psychological background contexts which facilitate adequate compliance. In other words, all the members of all the *Ori Oke* in Ilorin adapted to the linguistic, socio-cultural, physical and psychological contexts that constrained and facilitated the institution of the RRs, as well as the factors influencing appropriate compliance.

In the process of actualizing the clauses of the rules and regulations, the pragmatic act of binding was brought to bear on all the participants, because they were able to deploy the socio-cultural knowledge, the situation knowledge, voice, reference and relevance aspects needed to comply with the code of conduct. The extent to which the participants can comply with the RRs is dependent on the extent to which they can appropriate the clauses of the *Ori Oke* RRs to their contexts. In other words, the relative peace and tranquillity, law and order maintained at the *Ori Oke* were owed to the contextual and functional variables facilitated by the sck, ssk, voice, relevance and reference of the *Ori Oke* attendees.

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Chapter 34

Ori-Oke and Socio-Cultural Changes in Ilorin, North Central Nigeria

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Abstract

This study focuses on the impact and spirituality of Ori-Oke (mountain prayer) on the socio-cultural life of the people in Ilorin, North-Central Nigeria today. A lot has been written about the origin and missionary engagements with African society and culture and much of the writings expectedly are biased and negative. This study does not dwell on this issue from the point of view of historical accounts of happenings in Ilorin; but rather, approaches Ori-Oke, a Christian tradition from the perspective of social change driven by challenges and benefits. *The success of this work is greatly and entirely due to the support with funding by the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity through the generosity of the John Templeton Foundation, U.S.A. To them, the research team says a big thank you.*

Introduction

The research is centered on Ilorin, the spiritual and political centre of gravity both for the natives and settlers, Christians and Muslims in North-Central Nigeria. The city comprises of four distinct kingship groups that were brought together as a single political entity by the Nigerian government. Ilorin is therefore, an artificial creation called forth by the exigencies of political calculations. The coming together of the kingship groups Yoruba, Fulani, Nupe and the Hausa under a common political umbrella was secured after Yoruba civil wars of the 19th century. In the words of Babarinsa (2016), "Ilorin was the trigger of the Yoruba wars. Ilorin was an outpost of the old Oyo Empire where the last Oyo ruler, Afonja, commander of the elite Calvary

forces, was resident. Afonja, with the aid of Mallam Alimi, a Fulani Islamic cleric, later revolted against the Alaafin. Soon, the followers of Alimi, tired of Afonja's high handedness, staged a bloody coup and had Afonja assassinated and put his regime to a sorry end" (p.64). In other words, the artificial nature of Ilorin is evidenced by the mixture of different ethnic, cultural and kingship groups to which the component parts belong. Today as Babarinsa (2006) highlights in details, "Ilorin has no doubt, created over the years, an attractive ideology that is difficult to resist especially in terms of culture, spirituality and worldview" (p.64).

Ilorin forms part of North-Central Nigeria "bounded in the North by Niger State, in the East by Kogi State, in the West by the Republic of Benin and in the South by Oyo and Osun States" (O' Hear, 1983: 10). It is located within the present Kwara State of Nigeria. Our research team interviewed Pa Ade Akinawonu, a community leader in Oloje Area of Ilorin who described Ilorin thus: "The place, among other things, is well known for absolving multicultural and religious influences as soon as possible". An examination of concrete instances of socio-cultural and religious affiliations that would add illumination to the discussion would come later. Suffice here to note that the contemporary Ilorin community is mainly Muslim, but with a large Christian population. Hence, we turn to Christianity among the Ilorin people.

Christianity among the Ilorin People

Christianity reached Ilorin quite late; towards the end of the 19th century. A number of factors led to the late and slow encounter of Christianity with the people in Ilorin. The salient factors are highlighted below.

All members of the Muslim laity known as the Jamaa were free men and theoretically they were all equal. Under this ideology, no one could enslave another one or subject anyone to any form of bondage. These attracted young men and strengthened slaves to escape from their masters and take refuge in Ilorin. The conditions for acceptance were simple: accept the faith, join the Ilorin army and grow a beard.

Therefore, by end of the Yoruba wars in 1886, every Yoruba town has one person or the other in Ilorin. Though most of them settled in the city permanently, their descendants took advantage of the peace brought about by the British Colonial regime to preach Islam in all corners of Ilorin. Thus, Islam spread more rapidly among the people during peace time than when the Islamists of Ilorin were waging wars to expand their faith. In this regard, Olajubu (2003) notes that "Islam subsequently became an established religion in the city, so much so that it constituted a formidable challenge to the coming of Christianity at the beginning" (p.104).

Again, Islam accommodated Yoruba customs and rituals relating to marriage, social relations, farming and harvesting. By the same token, the use of herbs for medicinal purpose is accepted within Islam in Ilorin as in elsewhere. But this and many other African customs were seen as satanic by Christianity until recently. These issues and some others outside the context of this study accounted for the slow encounter of the Gospel of Christ with the people of Ilorin.

Be that as it may, today there is a heavy presence of Christianity in Ilorin. The research team interacted with Lere Adeyemi, a pastor with a private ministry resident in Sango Area of Ilorin. He responds to the growth of Christianity among Ilorin people thus:

Christianity is taken more seriously based on the persecution of Christians in the North. The indigenes, though still afraid of Islamic tendencies, are secretly turning to Christianity. Christian feast days like Easter and Christmas used to be a period of religious riots in Ilorin. But today the society appreciated the accommodating nature of Christianity because there was no day Christians took revenge on any Islamic feast day.

The situation of Christianity in Ilorin, North-central Nigeria re-echoes the post-apostolic period of Christian witnessing under the Roman Empire when suffering discrimination, persecution or even martyrdom was referred to the Holy Spirit. Adherents prayed to the Holy Spirit to give them courage to face the police and civil authorities and stand firm under persecution; and to give them wisdom and eloquence during their judicial trials, where they were

accused of unbelief and wickedness for denying the gods, particularly those of each city, and for refusing to worship the emperor (Boff 2015: 84).

The Christian tradition in Ilorin could be rightly stratified into four forms. They are the orthodox churches, the African initiated churches, the Pentecostal/charismatic churches and Ori-Oke ministries. The orthodox churches that came to the city at different times included the Methodist, the church missionary society, the Baptists, the Roman Catholics, the Sudan interior mission and Presbyterians. All these mission churches have one socio-economic institution or the other in Ilorin. Through the institutions run by them, they drive social change, encouraging western culture and waning interest in traditional rituals and customs. In this regard, the fertile ground was created for converts in orthodox churches to dwell in two spiritual realms; that of Christianity and indigenous religion when the need called for it. Olajubu (2003) explains why converts in orthodox churches have dual spiritual affiliations. "This was due to the fact that Christianity as introduced by the orthodox missions failed to offer complete fulfillment to the African" (p.104). The converts might be officially active in the churches, but they would invariably indulge in a clandestine patronage of the traditional shrines, medicine men and healers, who apparently satisfy their traditional African spirituality better. In this case the option is inauthentic faith and a crude combination of Christian and pagan practices (Nnamani 2015: 338)

The African initiated churches are commonly referred to as the Aladuras (praying ones). In Ilorin, the churches under this classification include: Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C), Cherubim and Seraphim (C and S), Church of the Lord and the Celestial Church of Christ (C.C.C). These are churches formed by the Africans to provide what were lacking in orthodox churches to the African, the complete fulfillment. The emphasis in these churches is placed on the African worldview and the recognition of the ability of the African person to create dynamic doctrines and rituals that are problem solving for the members and the society. Their doctrines and practices are deeply influenced by religio-cultural conceptions.

There is the use of musical elements in worship, practice of prophecy and spirit possession including active involvement in worship and liturgy. Contrary forces described as superstitions by the orthodox churches are taken seriously and are addressed in these churches.

The third group of Christian tradition in Ilorin is the Pentecostal-charismatic churches which came into existence in Nigeria in the 1970s. They are churches started by educated African members of either orthodox or the Aladura churches. Asiegbu (2007) offers a plausible insight on how Pentecostal-charismatic churches conceive themselves:

> The charismatic movement lives out the sense of belongingness, of a close relation with one another as a family of God's people. This sense of a family makes them refer to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Perceiving themselves as such, they go out of their ways to give one another a helping hand (p.145).

The leaders explain their calling to have come from God through divine intermediaries. These churches lay emphasis on the manifestations of the Holy Spirit and fervent prayers. Their theology is solely rooted in the Bible and they avoid all interpretative tools such as culture, as is true in Aladura churches.

Some of the churches under this heading are the Redeemed Church of God, the Living Faith Church, Deeper Life Bible Church just to mention a few. However, due to the obnoxious and ungodly influences in some of the churches in Nigeria and Ilorin in particular a fourth Christian tradition is making an inroad into the psyche of the people. As Alade (2016) points out,

> Church leaders' grandstanding notwithstanding, the people are aghast why elementary principles of living which men of faith preach inexorably, are practiced by them more in the breach than in their observance even in the fierce stare of the congregation (p.17).

In other words, the activities of most church leaders that negate the gospel values are resulting to the construct of a new anthropology

that takes note of the human person in her struggles and traumatized history.

The fourth Christian tradition trending in Ilorin is the focus of this study. It is Ori-Oke ministries. The image of the ministries or new anthropology is clearly expressed in the words of Hunt (2010):

> Jesus mission to the lost sheep of Israel cannot be reduced to the seeking out of individuals who have fallen out of the community. It must include an overthrow of structures of teaching and authority that restrict the mercy of God and exclude those whom God loves from the nourishing fellowship of God's reign (p.5).

It is a movement to profit from the mistakes of the other Christian traditions highlighted earlier.

In this contemporary time that falls within the scope of this study, Ori-oke, the Yoruba term for mountain prayer appears to have a far greater significance for a greater number of people in Ilorin. The significance of Ori-Oke today highlights indigenous Christians who are traumatized and disappointed with so many things in the churches and the suppression of their spiritual needs. They are now forming communities outside the church. The adherents are launching a counter culture rooted in gospel values and freed from organizational structures. For the emerging Christian tradition in Ilorin, Jesus is the Lord of the reign of God, the son of God. Samson Oyeniyi is in charge of Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Ori-oke in Fate Area of Ilorin. In an interview, he notes that Ori-oke as emerging Christian tradition "is more about letting the life and teaching of Jesus define what it means to be human rather than allowing the attitudes of religious and political leaders define the Lordship of Jesus". This is in line with the submission of Duncan and Kalu (2007) that:

> at several points in time, a movement would flare up as certain elements in the gospel, either its charismatic/pneumatic resource or its ethical imperative, would be emphasized enough to compel a new expression of its spirituality and structures (p.245).

Ori-Oke spirituality addresses concerns within the indigenous worldview and uses indigenous resource for prayer and worship.

However, the discussion here focuses on the impact and spirituality of Ori-Oke on the socio-cultural life of Ilorin people. The concept of "change" forms a key word in the present investigation. In order therefore, to understand properly the nature of Ori-Oke and social change in Ilorin, it is necessary to have an overview of this concept as the next subheading.

Theories of Socio-Cultural Change

Written materials on socio-cultural change in Africa usually centre on the influence of external forces in the elimination of institutions considered as outdated and the enthronement of new ones seen as dynamic and progressive. Augustine of Hippo, an African, born in 354 AD was among the earliest scholars to articulate the idea of socio-cultural change and what propelled or triggered such change. As the proponent of the concept of divine providence, Augustine argued that the trend of human history is directed by beings rooted in the spiritual realm. The "kpim" of Augustine's argument is that God is the cause of all changes. This line of thought ruled the world till the 18th century when the era of enlightenment began (Mbakwe 2008: 25).

The outstanding minds of the enlightenment period were Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and George Hegel (1770-1831). Kantian-Hegelian theory emphasized the shift from spiritual agency to humans as the agents of socio-cultural change. For them, it is human beings that are catalyst of any form of change in human society. Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Frederick Engel stepped in and gave economic interpretations to the Kantian-Hegelian theory of socio-cultural change. As noted by Marx and Engel, any change in society is propelled by the conflict between different classes in society, and the most essential factor in this conflict is group economic interest (Thingan 1981: 82). Furthermore, Edwards (1997) submits that Arnold Toynbee saw socio-cultural change within the

context of challenge and response with religion being of central importance in the transition from modernity to the future (p.592).

To give vent to socio-cultural change propelled by challenge and response, Duncan and Kalu (2007) explain,

> In African, many revivals appeared amidst African efforts to cope with colonialism, white settlers and missionaries. Later, the challenges of modernity and globalization would trigger widespread revivals in the quest for supernatural responses (p.246).

In other words, a number of scholars of African studies attribute socio-cultural change in Africa to colonialism and missionary expansionism. Therefore, the two basic perspectives of socio-cultural and religious changes in Africa are: the neo-Marxist school and the orthodox school (Mbakwe 2008: 35).

However, Nwabughuogu (1993) in his examination of socio-cultural and religious changes, particularly in Nigeria saw responses and initiatives as important factors of change in colonial Africa (pp.5-18). Thus, this research anchors its findings on the framework of internal factors and indigenous initiatives as perspective of socio-cultural change. The study takes note of substitutive and additive processes that could affect the religious and non-religious levels of the social life of a people. Substitutive process take place when a new social element replaces an existing one; and fits into a culture so perfectly that the new element functions with minimal or no institutional changes. In other words, the society continues to function without the pronounced effect of the new element. Additive process, on the other hand, occurs when new elements do not replace existing ones but added to them without inducing crisis or conflict values. The additive process operates in two directions. First when a society is able to receive new and good cultural elements from outside showing itself as a resilient society; secondly when it could induce changes within its own indigenous genius showing itself as alive and dynamic.

Further, in the case of purely religious elements, because of the close relationship between religion and culture, a syncretic process

normally comes into play: new and old religious elements are blended to form an entirely another socio-cultural element. At the non-religious level, a deculturative process may take place in which a loss without substitution is effected and an initial crisis results. According to Onwubiko (1999), "this happens when one of the cultures in contact refuses to undergo acculturative process and insists on a transposition of itself on new lands, lending without borrowing, nor prepared to borrow"(p.116). This may happen when externally induced social change is controlled entirely by outside forces.

Internally induced change drives on the innate social dynamism of a living tradition, which is responsible for changes that originate within existing social framework as a process of growth and as a response to new visions and development of a society. In this case, Onwubiko (1999) further argues that, "internally induced change can be a response to meet new needs and/or changing notions of old needs. When this happens a new logic develops and a reinterpretation of the old needs within the new cultural context is made to resolve internal and momentary crisis" (p.116). The resolution of the momentary crisis however, could only achieve a desired result or aim if it is not a mere reformulation of an old solution given by one of the interacting elements. In the light of the foregoing, Ori-Oke ministries as agent of social change is better appreciated and understood from the prism of emerging social synthesis that leads to solutions and re-solutions. It has the specific interest of liberating adherents from sinister forces and ancestral bondage. It is a unit of Christian evangelization effort that has contributed to the present day socio-cultural changes in Ilorin, North-central Nigeria.

In as much as external factors can trigger socio-cultural change, the internal factors and indigenous initiatives tend to be neglected. Yet, the framework presents itself to be rooted in problem solving. So, over against the framework that external influences contributed significantly to socio-cultural change in Africa, the research findings seek to highlight the fervor of internal factors and indigenously motivated change that Ori-Oke has initiated in Ilorin and to further articulate its spirituality through the understanding of the Yoruba worldview in contemporary time.

Fieldwork Summary

The fieldwork for this study was conducted from April 1st, to Decembers 30, 2016. The methods used to collect primary data were mainly group focused interviews and participatory observation. The two research tools serve to highlight the prevalence and strong influence of Ori-Oke in Ilorin. A total of twenty five mountains were visited in different parts of Ilorin with about ninety-five people interviewed in a group of five each. The respondents comprised the indigenous religious specialist, Christian leaders of mountains in the study area and adherents of Ori-Oke (both men and women). This enabled the research team to assess the extent of the influence, and how Ori-Oke expresses itself on the socio-cultural and religious lives of the people. Hence, salient interviews are acknowledged under bibliography.

The interview schedule, with the help of ten research assistants, sought information on the spirituality of Ori-Oke and how it expresses Yoruba tradition. Particular attention is given to how it is expressed in fellowship, thought and its influences in the daily lives of the majority of people in North-Central Nigeria. The responses received underscore the very strong belief in the spirituality of Ori-Oke, making it an emerging Christian tradition with very influential outlook. Although Ori-Oke spirituality does not enjoy 100 percent acceptance by conservative church leaders and those who claimed to be educated society elite, seeing the practice as barbaric and primitive, about 70 percent of them still send prayer requests to the mountains.

Clearly, both Christians and Muslims including traditional religious believers hold ardent beliefs in Ori-Oke and testify to the efficacy of the spirituality in daily struggle. It is to Ori-Oke spirituality that we now turn, with focus on its nature and the propensity to stimulate socio-cultural changes. The aim is to better appreciate the form of indigenous initiatives and perhaps understand how they function within a Christian setting.

Ori-Oke Spirituality and Socio-Cultural Changes

Spirituality, in the 21st century, has assumed a broad application beyond religious realm. The concept is no longer limited to only one area of discipline. Spirituality in this context could be described as the quality of being concerned about certain salient issues (Nwosu 2013: 185). Put another way, spirituality points to the various manners people appropriate ultimate values and express same in worship and lifestyles. Spirituality as well expresses a people's worldview. In Christian tradition, it is the whole human efforts to live in the light of conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit and within a community (Sheldrake 1998: 34). Spirituality, in other tradition, has both personal and communal dimensions.

In the research findings, we buttress the fact that any faith tradition or way of life that does not recognize the interconnectedness between creatures displays symptoms of spiritual emptiness. Hence, Velasquez (1996) states, "if we tried to experience this relatedness and to keep it present in our awareness, an intense spirituality would flow from it" (p.332). Intense spirituality flows from Ori-Oke because environment that includes mountains and humanity are interrelated.

The most significant transforming impact of the spirituality of Ori-oke upon the socio-cultural lives of the people in heirs in the ends of their religious sacrifice in the present time. By this is meant the effective use of Ori-Oke as a strong campaign to eradicate fetish and ritual sacrifices to local deities at road junctions and other locations. Joseph Olajide, the prophet in charge of Ori-Oke Iyanu (mountain of miracles) strongly emphasized that "in 1932 Joseph Babalola prayed on this particular mountain and drove away the deity and enthroned the living God. By extension, the prayer had effect on deities located at other places in Ilorin and beyond." Sacrifices are today brought to the mountains in exchange for divine blessings and favours directly from God. The readily applied Bible verse by mountain prophets is the Letter of James 1: 16-17:

> Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

What needs to become explicit in the process of such an impact is the experience of Christ within the religious, social and cultural settings of Ilorin, North Central, Nigeria.

It is important to note the primal imagination that is being carried forward into Christian usage here. Arinze (1970) captures it thus, "man recognizes that he is not master of the world. There are superior powers; invisible spirits, the ancestors, and there are also human spirits of wicked deceased people. Man regards some of these higher powers as kind and reasonable, many as severe, and others as bad, wicked and capricious" (p.34). In other words, the existence of an invisible universe in action all around human affairs is a given. In this case, life is short if expiatory sacrifices are in short supply. Hence, the fundamental reason why the Yoruba, like any other African has such a penchant to offer sacrifice in all its many forms. This is meant to sustain relationships with the super-sensible world and with human beings on earth. Awolalu (1981) offers further valuable insight to the foregoing.

No devotee of any divinity will omit to propitiate Esu first before offerings are made to the divinity being worshipped. No family head will fail to give the first drop of a libation to Esu before the ancestral spirits are fed. He must be propitiated first so that, in turn, he can co-operate in the favourable development of the ceremony to be performed (pp.29-30).

The manner Yoruba pay attention to divinities is indicative of their knowledge of the presence and co-existence of good and evil forces in the world.

Ori-Oke spirituality as a counter-culture and emerging Christian tradition is reformulating the Yoruba worldview and introducing the qualities of the Holy Spirit into it. Elements of success in this prophetic praxis are recorded because there is strong emphasis that divinities and the devil lead to death. In this regard, specific cultural elements are used in prayer over the people to effect deliverance from

sinister forces and heal the body and soul. The cultural elements virement into Christian use include palm-kernel oil, alligator pepper and fresh palm-fronts. The use of these items in Ori-Oke spirituality expresses the concrete effort to address the specific needs of the people. Therefore, deliverance and healing in Ori-Oke context is comprehensive and all inclusive. Ndiokwere (2001) sees the spirituality as a supernatural work and a continuation of the liberating, saving and protecting work of Jesus Christ,

> It means then taking away from a person a disturbance in life which acts as a deprivation of self-fulfillment and which is considered a parasite. In the end the expected result is to release someone from a stumbling block to human fulfillment which may be taken in a physical or spiritual sense (p.66).

God, who is invoked through the Holy Spirit, produces life. Ori-Oke pictures God as the father of light and creator of the universe. He does not change unlike the divinities. So, if he gives good today, he will not give evil tomorrow.

Through this kerygma, Ori-Oke prophets tend to take the sufferings, fears, and stories of their clients seriously; directing their yearnings to God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The requests and sacrifices that would have ordinarily been addressed to deities and divinities have come to be addressed to Jesus Christ (Bediako 1995: 176). In this instance, Ori-Oke is affirming the Yoruba worldview while at the same time pruning off some of its features and redirecting its focus upon Christ who is believed to be the Lord of God's reign. The activities of the Ori-Okes in this direction are inevitably giving additional dimensions to the traditional spirit of the people as observed by Ndiokwere (2001).

> Almost every type of misfortune in life is seen as the work of the evil one. There is therefore need to assure the worried people that this evil one- the devil-Satan-the Old deceiver is not left to cause havoc. He must be chained. Here it is not enough to announce that the Devil's

> power has been broken. It is equally important that the "man of God" is seen at work dealing drastically with the unseen power (p.69).

The wave of change as a result of Ori-Oke spirituality is also impacting greatly on a very important socio-economic aspect of life in Ilorin, the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry that is quite essential for well-being in Ilorin includes accommodation services, catering and food vendor. As noted earlier, Ilorin is close to northern Nigeria and the city enjoys the status of an emirate like other northern communities in Nigeria. In this regard, Ori-Oke spirituality enhances the commercial status of the city through human promotion in hospitality industry. The leadership allows the establishments of hostels, restaurants, small scale industries and mobile clinics around various mountains to meet the basic needs of people who come to the mountain to spend weeks and months with God. In this way, the scope of the spirituality is presently getting wider and also empowering the people. Walker (1995) recognizes that economic activities and the religious belief systems of the people are always related:

> Clearly, the call for leadership that is committed to a social ethic of breaking bread, and which is committed to worshipful awareness of our struggle's relation to God, is a call appropriate to our religious and churchy vocations. Black theological social ethical reflection affirms that our various religious communities are uniquely qualified and morally obliged to offer diverse-unified-bread breaking-God-conscious leadership in social thought and action (pp.119-120).

The bottom line is that Ori-Oke spirituality contributes to the comprehensive social, political, cultural and economic empowerment of the people. It makes the interlock between Christian living and economics to remain valid even in contemporary situation.

Another important socio-cultural change that has occurred in Ilorin as a result of the influence of Ori-Oke spirituality is in the area of social cohesion and covenant relationship. In the religious cosmology that undergirds the Yoruba traditional social organization,

people engage in oath takings and initiations for either individual group interest or for the community. Through these means cosmic forces operate for the so called "well-being" of the community. Macquet (1971) comments on this downward spiral of humanity in traditional African society,

> As in all societies, there are permanent groups of people with organized activities; the totality of these organized activities assures of continuity of the group, and meets the vital needs of its members. The society is self-perpetuating, maintaining its identity over several generations, and defending itself from external dangers as well as internal forces of disintegration. It also provides from the point of view of each of its members, a framework for life from birth to the grave (p.14).

This point to the importance of systems of social relationships. Thus, covenant gives meaning to society and enhances bond between people.

However, many of such covenant relationships in Ilorin are anti-social without most members knowing it, including those in government and public service. At times, they commit murder and practice slave immolation or human sacrifice. Since such is reprehensible and inhuman, Ori-Oke adherents declared frontal enlightenment on murder and human sacrifice. Some key members of such covenant fraternities take refuge on Ori-Okes in times of danger/conflict and they receive re-orientation through prophetic counseling, exorcism and deliverance. According to an informant:

> Cleansing Ilorin of blood sacrifices is so appreciated that even the present governor, Ahmad has a team of Ori-Oke Prophets and Pastors that pray in government house on regular basis.

In the light of the foregoing, Fagbemi (2016) notes that, "Kwara State government announced its resolve to eradicate cultism in all the institutions in the state. The step became necessary in order to

maintain the toga of peace, harmony and positive socio-cultural change already placed on the state" (p.5).

That Ori-Oke has such an impact in Ilorin is further evident from the fact that the governor's wife with other wives of government functionaries frequent mountains for prayer, especially during the periods of major Christian festivals, Christmas and Easter. Hence, in Ilorin politics and social networking, a sufficient level of desacralisation is being achieved in people's attitudes to power and interpersonal relationships. The wave of change as a result of this emerging spirituality directly resonates Bediako (1995) concern for new Africa:

> What is needed is an understanding of power that secures its source beyond the reach of human manipulation, at least conceptually, and so transforms the exercise of power in human community from rule into service. African Christianity may have no greater political mission in African societies than to assist in this transformation of outlook (p.182).

Ori-Oke Spirituality is asserting itself in the effort to determine ritual behaviour and regulate social attitudes. The embrace of the spirituality has definitely led to the decline of confraternity related bonds in private and public lives in contemporary time in addition to other socio-cultural and religious changes. The pattern aligns with the submission of Walls (2002) that to appreciate the continuity in African practices in its pre-Christian and Christian forms does not, in anyway, mean that African worldview is substantially unchanged as a result of the Christian impact, or that its basic phenomena have only continued under other names. The Christian era in African society has brought to it deep-rooted changes. Thus, all over Africa, one sees changes in relation to the reordering of ancestral worldview and emergence of new symbols and sources (p.123). This is the form Ori-oke, an aspect of African Christianity, is taking with its substance firmly tap-rooted in Jesus Christ the Saviour.

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Rev. Lanre Adeyemi, an elder with private ministry and resident in Sango Area, Ilorin, 2 December, 2016.

Chapter 35

Veneration of Mountain-spirits in Yoruba Traditional Religion: The Igbomina Example

Aboyeji, Adeniyi Justus & Aboyeji, Oyeniyi Solomon

Abstract

The mountaineering spree that is rife in Christian religious worship today is probably an African heritage of spirituality in religiosity. The height of this belief in most African churches today suggests firmly or tacitly that there is a strong connection between answerable prayers and mountaineering experiences. While some believe in ascending the physical mountains like Jesus did, some believe that one can make a mountain even of a valley like Daniel in the Lion's den or Jonah in the Whale's belly. In other words, wherever a Christian prays becomes his mountain, which could be anywhere, anytime; thus introducing a psychological dimension to the Ori-Oke phenomena. This paper does not attempt to research into the proliferation of Prayer Mountains all over, these days. Rather, it traces this to a general belief rooted in African worldview that every inanimate object, including hills and mountains, possesses spirits that could be beneficial or inimical to humanity. The paper adopts a historic-structural, systematic and analytical approach, with a combination of primary and secondary sources of data collection. Our findings reveal the tolerance of pluralism as one remarkable element of Yoruba religion. As such, one area of common ground between the indigenous and foreign religions, which is also one of the areas of continuity in African traditional beliefs, rooted in Afrel, is the veneration of mountain spirits. Our conclusion is that Christian religious worship has today, been greatly influenced by certain elements of the Yorùbá culture. One of such is the Ori-Oke phenomena in Christianity, which shares similar sacred creed with the Yoruba veneration of mountain-spirits. Examples would be largely drawn from among the Igbomina sub-group of the Yorùbás.

Introduction

Religion, a phenomenon which exerts great influence upon the conduct of a people, is described as the "collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and worldviews that relate humanity to spirituality and, sometimes, to moral values" (Odejobi, 2014: 584). Indeed, much of humanity find it difficult or at best unthinkable to exist outside of spirituality—religion. As such, all mankind worship something, whether we know it or not; as whatever we devote most of our attention or time to is often considered either an object or subject of worship. Religion is therefore, perhaps the strongest element in African culture. For the Yorùbá in particular, religion is perhaps, at best, inseparable and intertwined with the traditional way of the people's life. Consequently, religion has shaped the lives of the Yorùbá people, just as life has in turn shaped their religion. Indeed, religion is considered central to Yoruba culture. As such, Borokinni & Lawal (2014: 25) revealed that there are about 201 deities, 30 of which are commonly worshipped in Yorubaland. Most of them are believed to manifest interdependent physical qualities. Meanwhile, as against 201, Odejobi, (2014) in a contrary opinion, recorded that there are indeed more than 401 deities or divinities in Yorubaland, among which included *Ori* and *Oke*, both of them being among the prominent deities of the African pantheon. *Ori* (literally head) is the universal household deity believed as the god of fate or destiny. It is believed, according to Afolabi (2006: 40) that fortune or misfortune attends one according to the will or decree of this god. The synergy provided by the couple-deities resulted into Ori-Oke, with strong spiritual significance attached to it in Yoruba religious worship[1].

At the very heart of the concept of religion is worship, a tool employed by man in his quest to please the heart of the approved Supreme Being. Prayer, man's means of supplication and appeasement to his creator, is generally considered central to any religion, be it foreign or indigenous, Western, Eastern or Traditional. Generally speaking, Africans believe that all inanimate objects such as groves, rivers, crossroads, hills and mountains have demons or spirits dwelling in them. It was this same belief that was extended to

every tree and herb, which they believe possesses spirits in them, which empower the herbs for medicinal purposes. It was generally held that every plant or animal had its esoteric or original name at the time of creation by the Supreme Being, the Creator (Borokinni & Lawal, 2014: 22).

The Igbomina people, like most others in Africa, prior to the advent of foreign influence, practiced African Traditional Religion, which unlike other world faiths, have no predominant doctrinal teachings. Rather, they have certain vital elements that function as core beliefs. Among these beliefs are origin myths, the presence of deities, ancestral veneration and divination. African cosmology (explanation of the nature of the Universe) tends to assert that there is a Supreme God who is served by a number of lesser deities and spirits believed to be the connection between the living and the invisible world. Spirits may be divided into human spirits and nature spirits; both of which have a life force devoid of the physical form. Individuals, who have died, usually ancestors in particular lineages, constitute the human spirits. These spirits play a role in community affairs and ensure a link between each clan and the spirit world. Natural objects such as rivers, mountains and trees represent the nature spirits. Africans integrate this religious worldview into every aspect of life (Rauf, 2016).

In line with the aforementioned beliefs, the Igbomina people worshipped a number of deities such as Orisanla (Obatala); Sango, the god of thunder and lightning; Ogun, the god of warfare and Iron, Esu, Oya, and Osun some of who were held to be the guardians of the land and sea, the giver of bumper harvest and protector of life and property through whom they can relate with the Supreme Being (God) (Rauf, 2016). They also worshipped several other spirits often associated with natural physical phenomena.

Igbomina: A People and Land

The Yoruba constitute the largest ethnic group in the forest belt of West Africa, though geography-wise, monolithically positioned (Ayandele, 1983: 88). At all events, by the 16th century, a number of

distinct sub-cultural groups were identifiable in the Yoruba area, based on regional variations of the common language differences in political and social arrangements, details of land tenure and local emphasis on particular deities from the common pantheon. The principal ones were the Ife, Ijesa, Ekiti, Ebira, Owo, Akoko, Ondo, Ilaje, Ijebu, Egbado, Awori, Egba, Owu and Oyo. On the eastern and western fringes and around the coastal lagoons, there were other related groups. Prominent among those in the north-eastern section of Yorubaland were the Igbomina (Aboyeji, A. J., 2015: 26). To the eastern fringe of Yorubaland whose geography has long been conducive to human habitation (Aboyeji, A. J., 2004: 30-35) lived many sub-units such as the Ila, Ipo, Oro, Aran, Iyanga, Isin, Irese, Esisa, Ile-Ire, Oke-Ode and Share who constitute one of the major ethnic groupings there.

The people who live within longitudes 8° and 9° N, and latitudes 4° and 6° E are pure Yoruba, called 'Igbomina' or alternatively 'Igboona' (*NAK ILOR PROF. 2700 Vol. II*). The term is used to connote this distinct dialectical unit of the Yoruba, the land they occupy and the language they speak. They are bounded in the West by Ilorin; north east by Yagba; southeast by Ekiti; north by the Nupe; southwest by the Ibolo, and south by the Yoruba of present day Oyo State. To the north of the Ijesa and the Ekiti, and east from Oyo live the Igbomina (Aboyeji, A. J., 2015: 26-36). Ila is the most southerly town of this area. The Igbomina area was said to have originally included Illofa, Ekan, Odo-Owa, Osi, Osin, and Obo whose peoples are no more particularly keen in joining their Igbomina brethren (*NAK ILOR PROF 5083*). The Igbomina who were said to have formed at least three-quarters of the inhabitants of Ilorin province, occupying a large area extending as far as Ila-Orangun in Oyo province, predominate in the area to the south and east of Ilorin town (Hogben, & Kirk-Greene, 1966: 285). All Igbomina, apart from the Ila sub-unit are presently located in Kwara State of Nigeria. They are particularly found in the whole of Isin, Ifelodun and Irepodun LGAs of Kwara State and Ila and Ifedayo LGAs of Osun State.

One easily notable fact with the geography of Igbomina is that apart from nearness to water or availability of water in the location

of a settlement, availability of mountains seems to be the next most important variable. Obayemi (1976: 196) noted that hills exceeding 600 meters (2, 000 feet) were found in northeast Yorubaland. He observed that although the hill country was difficult, it was inhabited. Temple (1965: 444) equally noted that the southeast of Ilorin province was extremely hilly, with precipitous rocks while tin had also been found in the extreme southeast of the province. The Igbomina country was extensive, having streams, forests, rocks and hills, with many curious and beautiful things. Aboyeji (2004) revealed that one major factor that led to the formation of most of the settlements in the region, was the desire for safety. Besides, the rugged topography and marshy section provided adequate places of refuge for those fleeing from enemies. Adeyemi (1984: 9) particularly observed that hill-settlements were usually resorted to for protection during the pre-colonial era of slave raids and wars. Undoubtedly, this is not unconnected with some fundamental facts about the people's belief system woven around mountains as well as the reality and exigency of that era.

The Igbomina area was well noted for its many hills, some of which stretch in long range for many kilometres, culminating in the adoption of hill-settlement styles by the people. Aiyedun revealed that, whereas the towns on the hills relied on the hills enveloping them for defence, with no tradition of wall-building, settlements on the plains such as Igbaja, Adanla, Ofarese and Agunjin, built walls round themselves for defence and also relied on bushes surrounding them (Aiyedun, 1976: 8). Considering the sites of many Igbomina settlements such as Alabe, Oreke, Oke-Oyan, Afin, Owode Ofaro and Ikosin, one would better understand with Bowen when he concluded that: "*Nothing but the terror of war could have planted these villages in such places as these." (*Bowen quoted in *Gleave, 1963: 344; Aiyedun, 1976: 35-36 & Asonibare, 2000: 19)* However, following the introduction of British administration and the relative peace that followed, many of the settlements on the hills moved down to the plains while those on the plains expanded from their former compact character. Thus, as revealed by Aiyedun, in 1914, Oke-Aba moved down from the hill noted for Aba trees, Oke-Ode between 1919 and

1921, Afin 1930, Oreke 1931, Ofaro 1930 as well as Alabe and Ikosin (Aiyedun, 1976: 51-52).

The importance of hills and mountains as places easy for defence and therefore, focal points for settlement, need not be over-emphasised. Igbominaland is blessed with such prominent natural physical phenomena such as Osa, Odia, Oke Owa, Oke Ayin and Oganyin in Oro-Ago District, (Malomo, 2001: 8), Agunbelewo Hill in Ila area, Alaguso in Ijara-Isin, Awoji hill and forest at Iwo (Lasisi, 2016: 29), Atawara/Jewo-ese/Oke-Alagba (Isanlu), Alaguso, (Ijara), Jawoese (Pamo), Osa, Odia, Oke Owa, Oke Ayin, Oganyin (Oro-Ago District), Oke Agbana (Share), Oke Ora (Ora), Oke Ayeye/ Oke Ogegemo/ Oke Ija Osi/Oke Apata/ Oke Ijaka (Oke Oyan), and other impregnable hills in Olla, Oke Ode, to mention just a few. The hilly sections of Igbominaland create a mountainous scenery which equally provided natural and adequate safe places of refuge for those fleeing from enemies (Aboyeji, O. S. 2015: 60). These so-called fetishes in traditional African beliefs, which include specific kinds of animals and plants, trees, stones, statuettes, rivers, hills and mountains and are mostly believed to possess supernatural powers (Borokinni & Lawal, 2014: 25), were venerated in Igbominaland as it was throughout the entire Yoruba society. The place-names of some Igbomina communities have the 'Oke-' prefix, such as Oke Oyan, Okeya, Oke-Oyi, Oke-Onigbin, Oke Ayo, Oke-Aba, Oke-Ode, etc. It may, however, take a separate research to fully determine the esoteric extent of the 'Oke' prefix in all of these place-names.[2]

Specific Instances of the Roles Played by Hills and Mountains in Igbominaland

Like Òkè–Ìbàdàn (Oyo State), (Orosun) Asabari Hill (Saki, Oyo State), Idanre Hill (Ondo State), the Olosunta in Ikere-Ekiti, Oke-Iragbiji (Osun State), Olumọ Rock (Abeokuta-Ogun State), etc.; Òkè Festival (Hill Worship) is one of the common annual traditional festivals in almost all the towns with notable hills in Igbominaland. Such hills include Para Oke (Ila Orangun), Oke Agunjin (Agunjin), Oke-Ọra (Ọra), Oke-Ọdẹ Hill, Gegele (Igbaja), Oke-Awoji (Iwoland),

Oke Alagusọ (Ijara), etc. These hills offered protection and brought fertility. On this note, we will consider specific instances of roles played by hills and mountains such as the *Awóji* in Iwo, the Apate episode in Isanlu and the Oro-Ago hill-top warriors, all in Igbominaland which necessitated the veneration of hills and mountains.

Veneration of Awóji in Iwo

Although Christianity and Islam predominate the religious atmosphere in contemporary Iwoland, Sango, Oya, Mogala, Orisa, Erinle, Ibeji, Ogun and Osun have been identified among the idols worshipped (Alawoji, 1972: 13-14) in the years preceding the advent of foreign religions. While Isin had À*gbáàsin* as the soul of Isin Kingdom, Iwo Kingdom (Iwo, Oke-Aba, Odo-Ore, Sabaja) had *Awóji* as its religious and cultural soul. The Àgbá and its *Awòrò* (priest) never crossed his boundary to Iwoland just as the *Awóji* would either.

Undoubtedly, one of the most important traditional rites in Iwo was the veneration Awoji—a hill of historical background around which the history of the people revolve (Alawoji, 1972: 13-14). The founder of Iwoland, Ọgbayigbayi, a certified prince migrated from Ile Ajibọrọ in the Old Ọyọ Empire during the beginning of the universal civil and chieftaincy tussle in company of his three other classified brother princes who settled at Igbaja, Ọra and Ikọsin (now in Ifelodun L.G.A.). The Oníwó (owner of Iwoland) brought along the *Awóji* statuette with other insignia of royalty. Since then, the *Awóji* spirit might have resided in the seven-fold hill in Iwo known today as *Awóji*. The *Awóji* hill has ever since been venerated throughout the land and dominions of the Oniwonate.

The *Awóji* Festival was always celebrated annually at the peak of the harmattan season when *Awòrò* (the priest of *Awóji*), clad in flowing white[3], holding dressed palm branches in his right hand went to perform required rituals and offer statutory sacrifices. Gorgeously dressed, jubilant and expectant worshipers, particularly women, including girls, who patiently waited for the Awòrò beneath the hill, accompanied him, amidst repeated chants such as "*Kulukulu se, ojo ti*

baluwe se wowo..." (meaning something is drizzling like rainwater from the bathroom). Activities on such an occasion, included eulogies, dances and gyrations to *Awóji*. On such a day, barren women and others who had specific requests would bring hens and goats for sacrifices. Particularly noteworthy and as sign of answered prayers was the traditional and miraculous rain that usually fell, drenching the people as they descended from the hill shrine to the town (Alawoji, 1972: 13-14). So sacred was *Awóji* that no other community could come to the shrine of *Awòrò* (situated on a hill) except the *Awòrò* himself. The Awóji Festival was also said to have the *guaranteed* sound health and welfare of all the communities that became settlers and sojourners on Iwoland.[4]

Like the À*gbáàsin* goddess, *Awóji* was a god of fertility as many supplicants (usually with new requests and vows) and testifiers at home and abroad made it a date. Goats, hens, etc. were often brought to be sacrificed as thanks offerings (Aboyeji, A. J. 2015: 26). This became an annual socio-cultural and religious festival where supplicants would at the mount of *Awóji* offer thanksgiving and make their petitions. It was also customary that the *Awóji* grove was the first to be hunted in Iwoland annually. It was believed that the *Awòrò* lived longer in Iwo because of his unique position (Aboyeji, O. S., 2015: 104-105)

The Apate Episode in the Isanlu-Agannigan Raid

The period 1829-1835 was not only an era of open door policy but also one of peace and consolidation in Yorubaland. This is because, initially, Ibadan did not pursue any policy of aggressive imperial expansion. However, beginning from 1840, Ibadan's aggressive war policy began. This has been interpreted as the Ibadan wars of expansion. Indeed, by the mid-nineteenth century, Ibadan had emerged as the dominant power, on the relics of the Old Oyo Empire throughout the Yoruba country, although the Fulani of Ilorin were also fast expanding (Akinjogbin, 1998: 33-48). Prior to 1840 Ilorin had invaded and acquired some Ekiti and Igbomina towns. Nevertheless, after 1840, due to Ibadan's success at the Osogbo

Battle, which brought her into limelight as the defender of the remnant of Old, Oyo heritage and Yoruba tradition, Ibadan was prepared to expel Ilorin from the Ekiti towns, due to the change in the BOP in her favour. Because of her proximity to Ilorin, much of Igbomina fell under Ilorin's hegemony (Gege, 1987: 58-60).

Consequently, Ibadan's martial impact was felt virtually everywhere in Yorubaland, Igbominaland inclusive. Ibadan's official maiden incursion into Igbominaland came from the south-east, on invitation from Otun under Oderinlo, the Balogun around 1847. Indeed, the vicissitudes that followed the 19th century Yoruba wars and the battle for supremacy, particularly between Ibadan and Ilorin, the two contending super powers, had grave consequences for the Igbomina. It exposed Igbominaland to the constant raids of the Ibadan thugs/marauders, popularly referred to as *Agannigan*. The *Agannigan,* as they were referred to, borne out of their guerrilla approach, possibly pushed westward through Olla into the southeast of Isinland and plundered the Isolo group, like Oke-Ara. Ibadan reportedly, succeeded in defeating the Ilorin, Ekiti and Igbomina people. Efforts to resist the *Agannigan* might have been frustrated by poor visibility. Although in Gege (1987: 62)'s assumption, it could have been due to the harmattan haze at the time of invasion, the phenomenon could also be attributed to Ibadan's supernatural and herbal military weapons or charms—an important aspect of the 19th century militarism in Yorubaland (Adefila & Opeola, 1998).

Although some local sources recorded by Dada (1984) and Ajide (1985) have revealed that the inhabitants of these villages were scattered while many of them enslaved and taken captive to Ibadan, traditions among the Isin people, recorded by Gege (1987: 58-60), have denied any Ibadan defeat, in any war, others have portrayed Isanlu, for example, around the 1860s, as being victorious over the *Agannigans*. Some Isanlu warriors such as Esinkin Owokunrinmogbo and Asanlu Odasodekun, who were also reported to have been renowned for their charms and magical arts, after due consultations with the oracle in one of such military advances by the Ibadan *Agannigan*, were said to have been instructed by the venerated spirit-god–*Olooke* in Isanlu to simply lay some poisoned clubs beside the

hill. The *Agannigan* were reportedly beaten and defeated with the aid of those clubs by the *Olooke*. Hence, the theatre of war in Isanlu is said to have been christen *Apaṭẹ* (i.e. merciless killing) (Gege, 1987: 62-64). This is said to have brought about the coinage of the orile by drummers and ballard-singers in praise of the Isanlu men of valour as "*Isanlu iyeye, omo a-jo-kogun",* meaning Isanlu, progenies of those who danced to embrace warfare (Dada, 1984).[5]

In Gege (1987: 63-65)'s narrative, the mortality rate on the side of the *Agannigan* was estimated at about 100, 000 of Ibadan forces hit and killed by the small poisoned clubs (kukute). The Ibadan *Agannigan*, it is said, could not in a haste forget the humiliation they suffered in Isanlu in the 1860s to the extent that Isanlu citizens at Ibadan dared not declare their true identity. The mortality rate of the *Agannigans*, reportedly, made them to shift focus to Ijara via the route from *Igbo-Olomi-merindilogun* at Illa via Omo'lepo (Eleyin) plundering Ijara and looting the people of their valuables. Some Isanlu people such as Winlola and Ibitayo who had gone to Ijara for a wedding ceremony were reportedly captured by the *Agannigan*, who carted away with their loots before the Isanlu army could catch up with them at Oke-Emila near Eleyin. However, they might have been accosted, courtesy of the Isin irregular army under Esinkin Olusin and Ijimawo Jakolodi. The *Agannigan* had as one of their objectives, attacking Ilorin from the Omirinrin side through Otun-Ijaka via Igbaja. It was another strategy to attack Ilorin from Anyara–Ilorin war camp and farm settlement. At Isanlu, they encamped at Pagun, near Gaa-Omidoyin, but the town could not be taken as it was well garrisoned, having been fortified by the construction of deep trenches round it. The *Agannigan*, as a result, were routed by the Isanlu troops under the leadership of Ijimawo Erinjogunola. The *Agannigan* continued their raid of other places in Igbomina such as Okeya, Esie, Oro and Iludun.

Role of Hills in Oro-Ago Military Campaigns in the 19th Century

Samuel Johnson (1921; See also Aboyeji A. J. 2004: 84-85) put it on record that, *"…the Oro warriors possessed poisoned arrows which enabled*

them to do more damage to the ranks of their invaders". However, this had not always been as their resistances have not always met with success, especially as the Igbomina groups were initially apparently poorly co-ordinated. This led to several of their people being taken as slaves by the Fulani. This was also said to have resulted in the destruction of Ahun, an ancient settlement in the Oro District. As the inhabitants fled, some were captured as slaves while numerous others escaped north-westwards to establish Share on the Igbomina-Nupe boundary (Malomo, 2001: 23-24). However, as time went on, they were able to offer some more formidable resistances, by forming a series of alliances to resist their invaders (Aboyeji, A. J., 2004: 129-131).

The bravery that the Oro-Ago people later became renowned for in warfare may be attributed to two important factors. On one hand, the settlement had numerous blacksmiths who are said to have produced most of the arrows that the warriors in Oro-Ago used for most of their campaigns during the wars of the 19th century (Malomo, 2001: 19). On the other hand, the hilly terrain of Igbominaland, as in Oro-Ago and surrounding Districts were used to maximum advantage against their enemies. This enabled them not only to resist the invaders, but as oral tradition revealed, the Oro-Ago people usually fled up-hills, stationed themselves there and rolled heavy stones and rocks against the ranks of their enemies who dared to climb up their hills to attack them.[6] In most cases, the Oro-Ago solders confronted their enemies from the hill-top to deal with their invaders. This made many Igbomina people, during this era, to seek refuge in the area (Malomo, 2001: 23; Aboyeji, 2004: 129-131). Most of the refugees fleeing from the Yoruba wars in the 19th century reportedly fled to Oro-Ago further north. There, at Oro-Ago, the Ibadan troop was effectively resisted and repelled by the legendary arrow men of Oro-Ago (Akintoye, 1971: 43).

The Incursion Advent of Foreign Religions into Igbominaland

a. Islam

Although dating the entry of Islam into Yorubaland with precision may be a hollow ritual, Adam Abdullah quoted by Aboyeji

O. S. (2015: 145) has suggested that Islam first became known in Yorubaland during the reign of Mansa Musa Ali (d. 1337) Nonetheless, it is at least, certain that Muslims had existed in Yorubaland as far back as the 17th and 18th centuries; and by 1840, there had been a considerable level of Islamisation in Yorubaland, probably through the proselytising efforts of Hausa and Nupe traders and Mallams by the beginning from the 17th century when a considerable number of Nupe merchants and Mallams operated in the Old Oyo's capital and in the Empire's provincial territories, including Ilorin and the Igbomina country. By the early 1770s, for instance, a Muslim cleric of Epe origin, reputed to have warded off the later Nupe raids from the frontiers of Oke-Onigbin during the reign of Etsu Maijia II (1769-1777) was said to have settled in Oke-Onigbin.

b. Christianity

In the course of the 19th century, several Missionary societies came into Nigeria in repeated attempts to evangelise the black people of Nigeria. It is worthy of note that interior Missionary activities began relatively late compared with the coastal region. Hence, initial contacts were with the more accessible and more conducive coastal areas before they eventually gained their in-road through the so-called 'impenetrable jungle' of the forest zone into the hinterland. Prominent among these Missions were the Church Missionary Society (CMS) which established its Mission in Badagry in 1842, Abeokuta in 1846. It later spread into the interior of Yorubaland. This brought about changes to the existing indigenous institutions just as it challenged the already firmly established religious belief systems in the area, including Islam.

The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) which played a particularly prominent role in the spread of Christianity in many parts of Igbominaland set its feet on the Nigerian soil on 4th December, 1893. Despite initial challenges, some of which resulted to the death of some of the pioneering missionaries, between 1901 and 1915, a number of Mission Stations were established over the interior of the Sudan. Some of these included Pategi (1901), Wushishi (1904), Egbe

(1908 by Rev'd Tommie Titcombe popularly referred to as *Oyibo Egbe*), Oro-Ago (1912 by Rev'd Guy Playfair, *Oyibo Oro* and superintendent of the Mission in Nigeria) and Agunjin (1915). The Mission, especially after the establishment of a Mission Station at Agunjin in 1915, diverted its attention to the Ile-Ire, Igbaja and Oke-Ode Districts (*NAK Ilor Prof* 1105, 'SIM Site at Agunjin, 1915).[7] The SIM extended to Igbaja in 1923 (*NAK Ilor Prof* 1105, 'SIM Site at Igbaja, 1923).[8] That of Iwo and Owu came in 1924. From here, the proliferation of the *Good News of Peace* spread wide and fast to the rest of Yagbaland, Igbominaland, including Ilorin and elsewhere.

Hence, Islam had penetrated into much of Igbominaland before the advent of Christianity. For instance, while Christianity penetrated into Iwo in 1924, Islam had taken roots since around 1910 (Aboyeji, 2001). Consequently, the Igbomina, like all other Yoruba people, for that matter, could not preserve their indigenous religious creed *ad infinitum,* as the proselytising efforts of these Missions soon reached Igbominaland. The Igbomina, therefore, also gave in to the modernity of Christianity and Islam as these foreign religions found their inroad into the different Igbomina communities at different times.

Establishing Common Grounds between the Indigenous and Foreign Religions

One of the crises the early African/Yoruba Christian converts had to contend with in the 1880s was discrimination. Yoruba traditions and culture came under the threat of Christianity as British control was steadily consolidated when the policy of developing a self-governing native pastorate was abandoned (Odejobi, 2014: 587). Generally speaking, whites believed that blacks, particularly Africans were incapable of producing their own ideas. This Eurocentric belief and supremacist disgust for blacks and Africans has long been entrenched in such efforts as the Darwinian Theory, Hegel's *Philosophy of History,* etc. all of which became part and parcel of the historical orthodoxy of the 19th century,[9] and which is still strongly

upheld till today. Among such are words frequently and recently attributed to the incumbent American President, Donald Trump.[10]

What the missionaries failed to realise objectively and scientifically was the African social structure and their concept of God. As such, most of the Missions considered African religions and cultural values as primitive and pagan. Their agents, the missionaries must have erroneously perceived African religion as mere expressions of 'heathen unbelief and evil superstition'. Little wonder, the world outside church became dubbed as the 'kingdom of darkness' (Odejobi, 2014: 587) that must be prayed against and completely annihilated. This explains why the

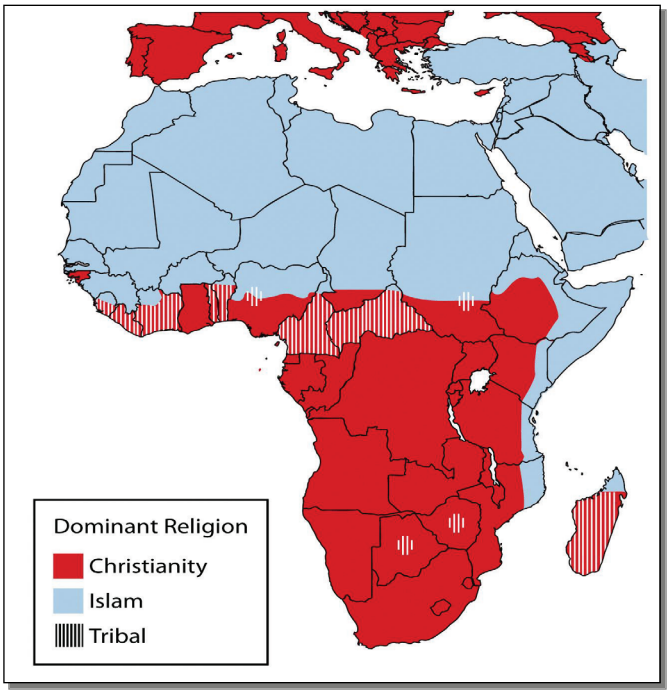
> ...missionaries tried to force African Christians to reject most of their cultural and religious beliefs and practices. Faced with continued missionary opposition to adapting Christianity to African culture, some Christian leaders decided to leave mission churches and form their own independent churches that incorporated aspects of African cultural practice that they felt were not inconsistent with Christianity....This discontent at European paternalism was one of the factors that led to the foundation of the African churches and by the late nineteenth century some African Christians decided to break away from missionary churches and form their own churches. The birth and rise of Pentecostal Indigenous Churches called Aladura (Praying ones) presents an interesting episode of protest and adaptation. The Churches were started by charismatic leaders of Yoruba descent such as Moses Orimolade, Emmanuel Akinsowon, Joseph Babalola and Bilewu Oshoffa who were aflame with desire to practicalize the saving and healing powers of God over people particularly in the superstition, poverty and disease-ridden societies as found in Yoruba land. Some of these Churches which started since the 1920s included 'Cherubim & Seraphim Church', 'Christ Apostolic Church', 'Church of the Lord' and 'Celestial Church of Christ'. These churches are largely Yoruba in character and population (Odejobi, 2014: 588).

By the early 20th century, the indigenous (Yoruba) Christian churches broke loose from the *imperialist* mission churches, a move

that was exceedingly beneficial to indigenous religious movements in Yorubaland. As Odejobi (2014: 587) further elucidated,

> ...the African Church (incorporated), when it began, reformed the elements of colonialism in the Church practices and doctrines replacing them with Yoruba substitutes; for example, praying for the Obas and Chiefs in their prayer book instead of praying for the Queen of England. It was evident that this group of people came out simultaneously in a way conducive to the Nigerians, taking into consideration the culture, customs and manners of the land in which they lived and relating to their God particularly to the life of their people.

A Map of Africa Showing Areas of Dominant Religious Concentration



Source: Strmiska, Michael F. *African Traditional Religion and the Coming of Christianity* Global Initiative: Africa SUNY-Orange, October 9, 2013.[11]

Scholarly works have identified a number of common grounds paramount in the belief systems between the foreign (modern Western and Islamic) religions and the indigenous African Traditional Religion, not only in Yorubaland but in Igbominaland specifically. Particularly prominent among these include the belief in the existence of God—the Supreme Being, the use of intermediary, belief in invisible spirits (be they malevolent or benevolent), belief in societal moral order in consonance with Islamic and Biblical injunctions, belief in the Mundane world, and belief in sacred places, cultic functionaries and objects of worship such as shrines, temples, mosques and churches (Aboyeji, O. S. 2015: 230-247, Aboyeji, O. S. *2014:* 19-43).

It is our contention in this paper that the sacredness of mountains is one particularly important identifiable common ground between Christianity and African Traditional Religions. Hills and mountains have spectacular spiritual significance in Christianity as could be seen in Mounts Sinai, Horeb, Carmel, Zion, Arafat, Hiraa, etc. in the Bible and the proliferation of sacred Prayer Mountains used for prayers today. In the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), for instance, virtually all their parishes are seen an and prefixed a Oke- (i.e. mountain)—*Oke Aanu, Oke Isegun, Oke Ayo, Itunu, Irapada, Ko sehun ti, Isoro mi tan*, etc. In the same vein, mountains such as Awoji in Iwo, Alaguso in Ijara, Onitoye in Oko Irese, (Aboyeji, O. S. 2015: 230-247; Aboyeji, O. S. 2014) to mention but a few, were venerated and could be seen as prayer-mountains, with testimonies of answered prayers and supplications.

The height of this belief in most African churches today suggests firmly or tacitly that there is a strong connection between answerable prayers and mountaineering experiences. It is particularly instructive to note that while the Aworo of Awoji in Iwo had to go uphill annually for his sacrifices and worship, all churches in Iwo today—First and Second ECWA Churches, C.A.C., RCCG, Baptist Church, etc.—are all situated on elevated places. It is equally worthy of note that while some believe in ascending the physical mountain like Moses when he went to receive the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19: 3), Prophet Elijah and his encounter with the

Prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18) his encounter with God on Mount Horeb (I Kings 19), Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-8), among other instances too numerous to recount, some believe that one can make a mountain even of a valley; like Daniel in the Lion's den (Daniel 6) or Jonah in the Whale's belly (Jonah 1 & 2). In other words, wherever a Christian prays becomes his mountain, which could be anywhere, anytime; thus introducing a psychological dimension to the prayer-mountain or mountain-prayer (Ori-Oke) phenomena.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the tolerance of pluralism is one remarkable element of Yoruba religion. The Yoruba may be said to have one of the richest, enduring and perhaps the most sophisticated ways of life on the continent of Africa. Although the Yoruba have many states (such as the Egba, Ilaje, Ikale, Igbomina, Ekiti, etc.) within the Yoruba nation, their culture is analogous as evident in their beliefs, values, customs, practices and social behaviours. Although today, Islam, Christianity and Traditional religions are practised side by side one another by the Igbomina people, traditional religion was the ancestral religion of the Igbomina people since time immemorial (Lasisi, 2015: 1).

Contrary to popularly held opinion that the Western culture might have swept clean the African culture, of its heritage and values in all its entirety, interestingly, some aspects of indigenous African culture have survived/escaped Western civilisation and modernisation holocaust. Although a great deal of the African culture might have been lost to modernity, it is worthy of note that certain aspects of indigenous culture have been preserved from extinction. Indeed, just as certain aspects of the African culture experienced westernisation, so also certain aspects of the Western culture also experienced Africanisation. Odejobi (2014: 584-595) has revealed how Yoruba culture, for instance, has influenced certain aspects of the Christian religious worship. Our focus in this study is to connect

the African belief in mountain-spirits with the prevalent mountain prayer phenomenon in Church worship today.

It suffices to note, at this juncture, that Christian religious worship, today, has undoubtedly been greatly influenced by certain elements of the Yorùbá culture. One of such areas is the Ori-Oke phenomena in Christianity, which shares similar sacred creed with the Yoruba veneration of mountain-spirits. As such, the mountaineering spree that is rife in Christian religious worship today is probably an African heritage or in the least, a toleration of the foreign spirituality in religiosity. Certain aspects of the two foreign religious cultures appear appealing to the traditional religion and vice versa. These two foreign religions provide functional alternatives in terms of culture to those of the Yoruba traditional religion, and tolerate certain aspects of the traditional religion (Lasisi, 2015: 100). Religion is therefore, both a factor for cohesion and disintegration. Emphasis on either the common grounds or differences consequently makes religion a tool for co-habitation or disharmony in the society (Aboyeji, O. S., 2015: xi).

We hardly can overemphasise it as we reiterate it, in the final analysis, that one area of common ground between the indigenous and foreign religions in Africa, Yorubaland and Igbominaland particularly, is clearly evident in the veneration of mountain spirits. This without a doubt constitutes one of the areas of continuity in African traditional beliefs.

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Notes

1. Oral information from Okewande, O. T. 27/01/2017, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

2. Oke-Aba, for instance was said to have been originally sited on the 'Aba' tree hill. However, during the reign of Oba Ranni Awo Olodoko Ayiku, the then Oniwo of Iwo lands, the incident of continuous fire outbreak which was destroying the Oke-Aba settlement and crisis of epidemics ravaging the town and which threatened to extinct the village made the Ifa Oracle to instruct them to vacate their land and sojourn on another land for the town not to be destroyed and suffer extinction. This incident reportedly made Oke-Aba to, in an unwritten but certified treaty, to be re-settled on a portion of Oniwo's land. Thus the name changed to Obate (i.e. the village the King of Iwo re-settled Oke-Aba on). See A History of Iwo Community in Isin L.G.A. (Kwara State) Presented to the Igbomina/Ekiti Traditional Council at Ajase-Ipo on Thursday 29th April, 2002, 3.

3. Indeed, customs forbade him from putting on black cloths and from travelling out of Iwoland under whatever circumstance.

4. A History of Iwo Community in Isin L.G.A. (Kwara State) Presented to the Igbomina/Ekiti Traditional Council at Ajase-Ipo on Thursday 29th April, 2002, 2.

5. Oral Tradition from Isanlu shows that this is being recently re-coined and modernised to "*Isanlu iyeye, omo a-jo-kore"* (i.e. Isanlu, progenies

of those who danced to embrace good/fortunes). See also Dada, S. O. "Isanlu-Isin, Since 1900" Unpublished B. A. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ilorin, 1984.

6. Oral information received from Mrs. C. E. Comfort Dada (Oro) on 29/12/2003. In a comparative analysis, Mr. Jide Ige (Oral information, Ilorin, 24 January, 2017) also described how some Kogi people, in defence also cultivated the habit of mounting uphill against the enemies and pouring red on after them. By so doing, any of the invaders who dared to chase them uphill would always slip off while those uphill are at the advantage of hurling rocks and pebbles against the ranks of their invaders.

7. *NAK Ilor Prof* 1105, 'SIM Site at Agunjin, 1915.

8. *NAK Ilor Prof* 1105, 'SIM Site at Igbaja, 1923.

9. For the documentation of more of such Eurocentric prejudices, see Curtin, P.D. "Recent Trends in African Historiography and their Contribution to History in General" in J. Ki-Zerbo (Ed.) *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. I*, Heinemann. California. UNESCO, 1981 and Fage, J. D. "The Development of African Historiography" in J. Ki-zerbo (Ed.) *UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. I,* Heinemann. California. UNESCO, 1981.

10. Words attributed recently to the incumbent American President, Donald Trump, in relation to his supremacist disgust for blacks, Africans and Arabs, if true, are particularly unfortunate. In one of such, he reportedly argued that, *"...the white man is created to rule the black man....The fact that blacks and Arabs look like humans does not necessarily make them sensible humans. Hedgehogs are not porcupines and lizards are not crocodiles because they look alike. If God had wanted us to be equal to blacks and Arabs, he would have created us all of a uniform colour and intellect. But he created us differently. Whites, blacks, yellow, the rulers and the ruled. Intellectually, we are superior to the blacks and Arabs. That has been proven beyond reasonable doubt over the years...."* WhatsApp message titled: "Donald Trump's Full Speech on Why He Hates Africans and Arabs." Received on 19 January, 2017.

11. It also provides this breakdown of religions in Africa today: About 40% follow Christianity, 40% Islam, and 20% African Traditional Religions.

The dynamic nature of Christianity has necessitated its movement from the cathedral to the mountain top. This has occasioned a proliferation of Prayer Mountains throughout Africa. In Yorubaland of southwestern Nigeria, Prayer Mountain is known as Ori-Oke. Like many communities in Africa, the Yoruba are confronted with fundamental challenges in life for which people do not rest until they find solutions. Within the praxis of Nigerian Christian lexicon Ori-Oke is synonymous with the enactment of a sacred space on a mountain top characterised by various prayer regimes, rituals, exorcism and religious practices, aimed at eliciting the help of the divine to alleviate the existential challenges of devotees. This book explores the resacralisation of space on the mountains, highlighting how humans and the divine interact in Yorubaland. It brings into conversation 35 empirically rich scholarly essays on the role of Ori-Oke to those seeking divine intervention in their lives. Today, Ori-Oke have become centres of pilgrimage as a result of the lived experiences of devotees, creating unique religious value quite distinct from the aesthetic value of these mountain tops. The spirituality of Ori-Oke is anchored on the absolute belief in God and the infusion of traditional African worldview sensibilities in religious rites and worship. Ori-Oke spirituality employs resources of Christian tradition, introduced by the formal agents of Christianity, synthesised with traditional culture, to develop a life based on the precepts of an African Christianity. The book is an intellectual discourse on Ori-Oke spirituality, reflecting its contemporary relevance in a context of religious innovation and competition.

* * *

The editors are university-based academics in Nigeria and Ivory Coast. They all participated in a research project – "Religious Innovation and Competition: Their Impact in Contemporary Africa" – funded by the John Templeton Foundation in collaboration with the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA.

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Common Initiative Group
P.O. Box 902 Mankon
Bamenda
North West Region
Cameroon

ISBN 978-9956-550-03-6

9 789956 550036